DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 163 483 CS 204 553

AUTHOR Evanechko, Peter; And Others
TITLE Language: B. C. (British Columbia); An Assessment in the English Language Arts, a Pilot Study. Part 3. Test Results.
INSTITUTION British Columbia Dept. of Education, Victoria.
PUB DATE Oct 76
NOTE 241p.; For related documents, see CS204550-553 ; Parts may be marginally legible

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$12.71 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Accountability; *Educational Assessment; Elementary Secondary Education; English Instruction; Grade 4; Grade 8; Grade 12; *Language Arts; *Performance Factors; Program Evaluation; *Reading Achievement; Test Results; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *British Columbia

ABSTRACT

The first segment of a long-term educational assessment plan, for which this three-part report was compiled, called for a study that would survey the status of English language arts programs in the province of British Columbia and serve as a pilot for future assessment programs. This portion of the study presents results from the third phase of the language survey which was designed to identify the difference between the desired outcomes and the degree to which they were being met by pupils, specifically in the reading test at the grade 4 level and the written composition test taken in grades 8 and 12. Chapters consider test results according to general categories and in relation to such student characteristics as number of schools attended, number of hours of television viewed, sex, age, length of residence in Canada, and language spoken. Appendixes present statistical summaries of the test results, copies of each test, and teacher comments. (HAI)

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LANGUAGE: B. C.

An Assessment in the English Language Arts

A Pilot Study

PART 3

TEST RESULTS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Prepared for the Learning Assessment Branch of the Department of Education by the following Survey Team:

Peter Evanechko - Chairman - Faculty of Education
Jean Dey - Faculty of Education
Terry Johnson - Faculty of Education
Kerry Quorn - Faculty of Education
Nelson Smith - Department of English
of the University of Victoria

Chapter 1 by P. O. Evanechko

Chapter 2 by N. Smith

October 1976

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CS204553

British Columbia Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title.

Language: B.C.

"Prepared for the Learning Assessment Branch of the British Columbia Department of Education by the following Survey Team, Peter Evanechko, Chairman ..."
Survey prepared with the assistance of the Language: B.C. Management Committee.
A Summary report is issued separately.
Includes bibliographical references.

Contents.- Part 1. A report dealing with goals.- Part 2. A report dealing with instructional practices.- Part 3. Test results.

1. Language arts - British Columbia.
2. English language - Study and teaching.
3. Education - British Columbia.
I. Evanechko, Peter O. II. British Columbia. Dept. of Education. Learning Assessment Branch. III. Title.

LB1576 L3 372.6'09711

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Jerry Mussio - Chairman - Department of Education

Robert Aitken	- Alpha Secondary School, Burnaby
Olga Bowes	- Department of Education
Jean Dey	- Faculty of Education, University of Victoria
Peter Evanechko	- Faculty of Education, University of Victoria
Alex Holm	- Department of Education
Wes Knapp	- BCTF Professional Development Division
Theresa Kratzer	- Principal, Queen Mary Elementary, N. Vancouver
Viviane McClelland	- Secondary Consultant, Richmond School District
John McVicar	- Delview Jr. Secondary School, Delta
Doreen Radcliff	- Curriculum Coordinator, Primary & Pre-school, Victoria School Board #61

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PREFACE

The need for a continuing assessment of the progress of education in British Columbia arises from the great demands which are now being made on education. To satisfy these demands, taxpayers are being asked to furnish far greater resources for the educational system than ever before, and much more is being requested. It is becoming increasingly clear that the resources required cannot be provided except by using the greatest care in their allocation and use.

For many years, legislators and educators have made decisions which have affected the course of education in the province and determined the expenditure of increasingly large sums of money. To this date, the reason for changing educational policy or investing more money in the school system has been equated with lower drop-out figures, a greater variety of course offerings and other such indicators. The underlying assumption has been that the quality of education - what students actually learn - is somehow related to such factors.

The lack of information, on a province-wide basis, describing what is being learned in the schools and the quality of that learning has become a major concern to many people within the educational system. In response to this general concern, the Department of Education established a Joint Committee on Evaluation in the fall of 1974 to advise the department on the development of a long-term assessment plan in British Columbia. About the same time, a team of researchers from the University of Victoria was retained by the Department to conduct a study in the English Language Arts. This study was subsequently launched as a survey of the status of the language arts and as a pilot for future assessment programmes.

Purpose of Assessment

It has been recognized that for an assessment to be maximally effective, it is necessary that it be designed to assess the real needs in the province.

The information from the assessment will be used to provide the public and educators with a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the public school system. It is intended that the information resulting from the Language Assessment will be used in the development of curricula at both the provincial and local levels. The results should also indicate directions for teacher education and professional development. In addition, it is expected that educational research questions will be raised and priorities for resource allocation indicated. Since many assessment activities are being attempted for the first time, an additional purpose of the Language Assessment is to contribute to the improvement of future assessments.

Components of Assessment

The following three components of an assessment programme were identified by the Joint Committee on Evaluation for the survey:

1. Goals Assessment - designed to identify and appraise the desired learning outcomes of the English Language Arts. Goals extant in the field were adopted and/or adapted by the Survey Team and new goals were developed by team members and teacher consultants.

2. Outcomes Assessment - designed to survey student knowledge and skills as related to these learning outcomes. Tests in Reading at the Year/Grade 4 level and written composition at the Year/Grade 8 & 12 levels were developed by the Survey Team and Teacher Consultants.

3. Discrepancy Analysis - designed to identify the difference between the desired outcomes and the degree to which they are being met by pupils. This analysis will include examination of methodologies and instructional materials being employed. While discrepancies between goals and performance may be caused by various factors

such as student and community variables, the assessment will focus on the relationship between teaching goals and teaching approaches.

This report will deal with the results of a Reading Test at the Grade/Year 4 level and a Written Composition Test at Grades 8 & 12.

Organization of the English/Language Arts Assessment

In the first phase of the Assessment, which was conducted during May and June of 1975, teachers and school trustees were asked to describe the desirable learning outcomes of the English Language Arts. In addition, teachers were asked to describe existing methods and materials being employed in their classrooms. Questionnaires were prepared for this phase of the assessment and were directed at teachers of Kindergarten and Grades 1, 3, 7, 8, 11 and 12. For Grades 1, 3 and 7 four questionnaires were prepared: Reading, Oral Communication, Written Language and Literature. Separate questionnaires were prepared for kindergarten and secondary English. A Questionnaire was also prepared and mailed to every school trustee in the province; the goals statements in these questionnaires were adapted from the teacher questionnaire.

Development of the questionnaires proceeded through several stages. After the research team had formulated the overall design and conceptual framework for the survey, individual members prepared drafts of questionnaires in their own area of expertise. These drafts were reviewed by the entire team and rewritten and a subsequent draft was examined by the management committee and a review committee comprised of academics and teachers in the field. At this time also, a pilot study using the instruments was conducted in the Sooke School District. In addition, members of the

Technical Advisory Committee made suggestions for change. All information from the above sources was used in the final draft of the questionnaire.

In the second phase of the study, conducted in January, 1976, pupil performance in selected areas of the Language Arts programme was assessed. The areas chosen were Reading at Grade/Year 4 and Written Expression at Grade/Year 8 and 12.

CHAPTER 1

TEST RESULTS

READING GRADE/YEAR 4

INTRODUCTION

Assessment Procedure

Development and implementation of the Grade/Year Reading 4 test occurred over a period of ten months beginning in April of 1975 and ending in January of 1976. Those events proceeded through the following stages:

> Teachers from each elementary and secondary school in the province responded to a detailed questionnaire on the goals and instructional practices of Language Arts and English.
>
> Teachers' ranking of instructional goals were examined and particular attention was paid to those reading goals and objectives that Year 3 teachers had rated as Essential, Important or Of Moderate Importance for pupils completing Year 3.
>
> Once a series of "Essential-Important" reading objectives had been validated, items (questions) were developed to test each objective.

The University of Victoria research team and the Management Committee cooperated in the selection and development of suitable test items for a Grade/Year 4 reading assessment. Several test item banks were examined, including the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the Instructional Objectives Exchange, U.C.L.A. and The Objectives and Items Cooperative, Amherst, Massachusetts. Items selected from these sources were appropriately modified and in those areas where items were unavailable, new test items were developed by the research team and teacher consultants.

Items were grouped into two test booklets to reduce the amount of in-class test time required. The booklets were piloted in Year 4.

classrooms in Victoria and Prince Rupert. Schools selected served students from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. Teachers and pupils evaluated individual items from the point of view of clarity, readability, and validity for students beginning their fourth year in school.

The most notable changes emerging from the pilot sessions were the deletion of a reading passage in the interests of test length and the withdrawal of a section dealing with students' attitudes toward reading due to difficulty in devising a suitable instrument.

The test booklets sent to all Grade/Year 4 classrooms contained the domains, objectives and items used in the reading assessment.

A domain is a general category used for grouping related objectives. An objective describes more specifically the intended learning. Each item is keyed to a specific objective and measures a facet of that objective.

This reading test was based on three general domains: Word Identification; Comprehension of Prose Materials; and Comprehension of Functional Materials. Each of these domains was specified in a number of objectives and each objective was measured by a number of test items distributed between the two test booklets.

In January of 1976 each Grade/Year 4 pupil in B.C. completed one or the other of the two booklets comprising the reading test. Classroom teachers conducted all phases of the test. A total of ninety minutes was made available for all activities connected with the assessment. This included 40 minutes for completion of the test. In most cases, less than one-half of that time was required.

Results from the first and second phases, the teacher questionnaire and the pupil performance assessment, will be combined to identify discrepancies between the desired outcomes in Reading and Instruction and the level of pupil performance. Many factors may affect pupil performance. One of the most important of these is the nature of the student (such as socio-economic background). While these many influences will not be investigated, information on instructional practices provided by the teachers will be used in an effort to identify some of the reasons why any discrepancies exist.

Selecting Students for Assessment

In selecting the student sample for the first reading assessment, the nature of the developmental reading programme was considered. Reading skill development is highly emphasized during the primary grades with the goal of developing basic reading skills at that level so that these skills may be applied to other learning tasks at the intermediate and secondary levels. Children by Grade 4, therefore, are considered to have developed a sizeable repertoire of skills in reading and for this reason were selected as the subjects for the assessment.

A total of 34,626 Grade/Year 4 children were involved, or 94% of the entire school population in B.C. at that level. All school districts in the province were included.

Because the test was long it was divided into two equal booklets and children were randomly assigned to one of the sections of the test. From a statistical point of view the result of this procedure is the same as if all children had completed the entire test.

Data Analysis*

All tests were returned to the B.C. Department of Education Learning Assessment Branch for scoring. Data from the tests were analyzed through a programme prepared by B.C. Research.

The analyses focussed on several levels. These included an examination of performance in terms of percentage of correct responses at the level of the reading domain, the specific objective, the test item and performance of students on the basis of variables such as sex and language background. District results are being made available where requested.

Judging the Data and Setting Criteria Levels

How do children read today in comparison with previous times? How do they read in comparison with students living elsewhere? These questions are not answered in this report due to the difficulties of collecting data to be used in the comparison. What will be done is to determine how well children can perform on a representative set of reading tasks. This performance will be considered with respect to acceptable performance as determined by a panel of teachers and other individuals. The results of this procedure will provide educators with some baseline data which may be used in planning learning experiences for children.

In early May, 1976, an interpretive panel of individuals met in Kamloops to review the results of the reading assessment.

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* A separate report on the psychometric properties of the test will be available.

Department personnel from the Learning Assessment Branch conducted the review. The combined experience and knowledge of the panel members helped ensure that their comments and recommendations would be relevant for B.C. students.

It is most important to note the several limitations of the use of such a panel. Most important among these is the subjective nature of the opinions presented. Second is the lack of representativeness of the group. Third is the illusion of precision created by assigning numerical values to upper and lower limits of performance. For these reasons the comparison between actual and desirable performance must be viewed with caution, since another group of individuals might interpret these data differently.

A further point concerns the statistic used in reporting the results. Mean scores have been used and while they are a straightforward and clear means of reporting overall group performance, they conceal individual subject variability. This suggests that while, in general, students were seen as performing satisfactorily in reading, there are many students who are not capable or reading at the expected level as well as many who read above the expected level. These individual variations should not be dismissed.

1. The panel, consisting of nine experienced teachers, a professor of reading education and a parent, were presented with the following materials:

   a) a rationale for the Learning Assessment Programme

   b) a paper outlining the procedure to be used in defining an "acceptable/satisfactory" range of student performance in the Year 4 reading objectives and domains

   c) a booklet ("Composition of the Year 4 Reading test") referencing each of the test items to a specific objective and domain.

2. Panel members were grouped into five pairs. Each pair contained a range of experience backgrounds: urban-rural; primary-intermediate; high-low socio-economic, etc. Each pair was asked to define a satisfactory or acceptable range of performance for each objective. This was done with reference to:

a) the relative level of difficulty of the test items referenced to the objective

b) the relative level of development of children in the 5th month of Grade/Year 4.

3. Each pair reviewed the test items and arrived at an acceptable range of performance for the objective. This range was compared with the judgement of other pairs and a consensus range was developed by the entire panel. For example, four test items were used to measure the students' ability to identify the main idea in a paragraph or longer passage. Before seeing any test results, the panel considered a hypothetical test consisting of 100 test items similar to the four in the test and then determined the range of performance that they as teachers and members of the public would find acceptable or satisfactory. If a range of 75 to 80% correct was defined as acceptable this meant that a score of less than 75% would be indicative of a weakness and the teacher would take corrective action with any student scoring less than 75. A score of above 80%, on the other hand, would represent a definite strength in the skill area.

4. When the panel had reached consensus agreement on all of the objectives in a particular domain, the actual student results were distributed and a comparison between the defined range of acceptable performance and actual student results was made. Where actual performance was lower than the acceptable range, it was viewed as a weakness that would benefit from further investigation and corrective action. Where the actual performance was higher than that predicted by the panel, it was viewed as a strength. Where actual performance fell within the panel's predicted range, it was viewed as satisfactory or acceptable.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIVE COMMENTS

Performance by Domain Areas

For the purposes of this assessment the 15 objectives of reading instruction at Grade/Level 4 identified in the Survey were grouped into three Domains: Word Identification, Comprehension of Prose Materials and Comprehension of Functional Materials.

DOMAIN 1: Word Identification - Word Identification skills aid the reader in recognizing or identifying unknown words. They include associating sounds with letters (phonics), recognizing high frequency words* and word analysis procedures such as identifying root words.

A specific example of a word identification skill is a student's ability to use a common phonic skill through a knowledge of vowel sounds. A test item related to this skill required the student to determine which one of a series of words had a long vowel sound. It is important to note that since 94% of the grade 4 population was tested, all scores presented in this chapter are treated as parameters. In other words, the scores appearing in the following tables are considered as true scores for the population of grade 4 students in the province.

Table 1 identifies each of the five objectives which formed the basis of assessment in this domain and presents the student performance on a provincial level. The bar graph in Fig. 1 indicates actual student performance while the range of satisfactory performance is shown by a box. The domain score represents an averaging of all objective scores in the domain; no attempt was made to determine the range of satisfactory performance for the domain as a whole.

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* Johnson, Dale D., "The Dolch List Reexamined", The Elementary School Journal, Vol. 72, October, 1971, pp.29-34.

Table 1

GRADE/YEAR 4 READING ASSESSMENT

PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR DOMAIN 1: WORD IDENTIFICATION

N = 34,626

	Average Score (% correct)	Range of Acceptable[2] Performance as Defined by Panel
Objective 1.1 The student should be able to use visual memory to recognize high frequency words.	98.5	(80-100)
Objective 1.2 The student should be able to use common phonic skills through a knowledge of such elements as rhyming words and sound-symbol relationships.	74.6	(60-79)
Objective 1.3 The student should be able to identify such aids to structural analysis as prefixes, suffixes and root words.	61.0	(60-76)
Objective 1.4 The student should be able to use context to determine the meaning of a word in a sentence.	74.1	(59-77)
Objective 1.5 The student should be able to use a dictionary through a knowledge of alphabetical order, guide words, etc.	56.9	(59-76)

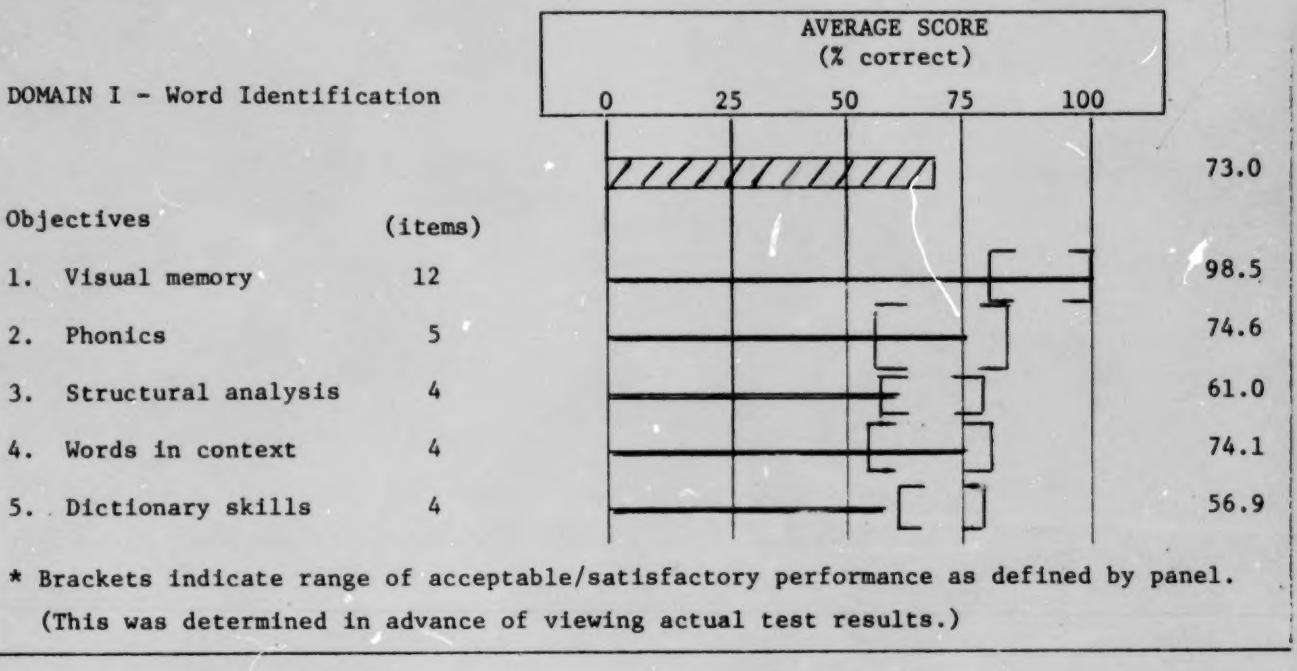
[2]For example: If the range of acceptable or satisfactory performance is defined as 70-85%, this suggests that any student who scores less than 70% correct should receive corrective assistance from the teacher for this skill area. A score of greater than 85% would be indicative of a strength.

Figure 1

GRADE/YEAR 4 READING ASSESSMENT

DOMAIN I - WORD IDENTIFICATION

N=34,626



* Brackets indicate range of acceptable/satisfactory performance as defined by panel. (This was determined in advance of viewing actual test results.)

Discussion:

Domain I - Word Identification

A weakness was noted in the area of dictionary skills (objec In particular, students seem to be experiencing difficulties with diacri markings and the use o. guide words. The Committee questioned the imp of diacritical skills but agreed that the use of guide words ought to rec more emphasis in the schools. The committee felt that while most students know many of the underlying skills which are necessary to use a dictionary effectively, the same students may be experiencing difficulty in transferring those skills to a practical situation.

Aside from the weakness noted in dictionary skills, the committee was pleased with the overall performance in the domain of word identification. That is, in general, students appear to be acquiring a basic vocabulary; they are able to use common phonic skills; they understand parts of words; they appear to be able to determine the meaning of an unknown word in a sentence.

DOMAIN 2: Comprehension of Prose Materials -

For the purpose of this assessment reading comprehension was divided into two groups of comprehension skills: comprehension of prose materials and comprehension of functional materials. All comprehension skills contribute to the student's ability to acquire meaning from ideas conveyed in print. In this domain, the skills include reading for main ideas and for details, indentifying sequence and determining the purpose for reading - all in prose selections similar to those which constitute a developmental reading programme. A specific example of a comprehension skill is a student's reading a one paragraph passage and then answering a question about the main idea of the paragraph. Table 2 and Fig. 2 present the results of student performance on Domain 2 as compared with the performance ranges as defined by the interpretative panel.

Table 2

GRADE/YEAR 4 READING ASSESSMENT

PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR DOMAIN 2: COMPREHENSION OF PROSE MATERIALS

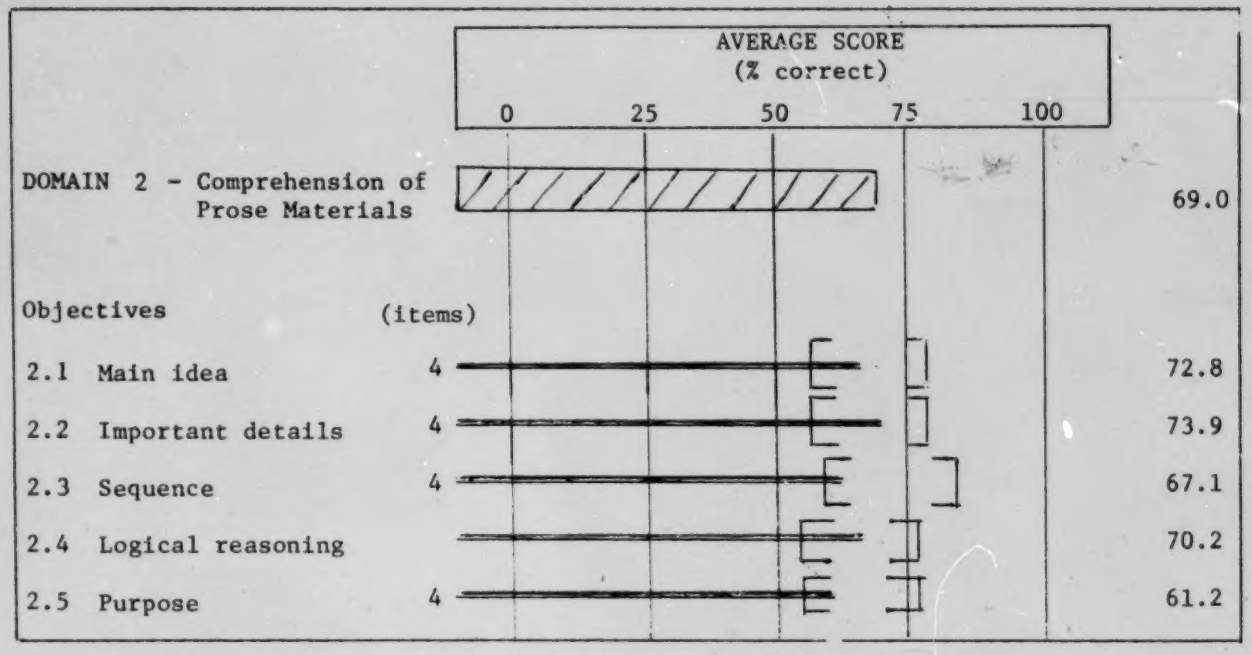
N = 34,626

	Average Score (% correct)	Range of Acceptable Performance as Defined by Panel
Objective 2.1 The student should be able to identify the main idea of a paragraph or longer passage.	72.8	(61-78)
Objective 2.2 A student should be able to identify and relate important and supporting details.	73.9	(61-78)
Objective 2.3 The student should be able to determine the sequence of events in a paragraph or longer passage.	67.1	(62-80)
Objective 2.4 The student should be able to apply logical reasoning skills in the reading of a paragraph or longer passage.	70.2	(56-76)
Objective 2.5 The student should be able to determine the purpose for reading a paragraph or longer passage.	61.2	(56-76)

Figure 2

GRADE/YEAR 4 READING ASSESSMENT

PROVINCIAL RESULTS BY DOMAIN AND OBJECTIVE
N = 34,626



Discussion:

Domain 2 - Comprehension of Prose Materials

The committee noted the overall performance in this domain is satisfactory and that it appears that the typical student in British Columbia can read and understand prose materials at an acceptable level of proficiency. Overall then, students in British Columbia are able to identify the main idea in a paragraph; they are able to relate important details in a paragraph; they can determine sequence of events; they are able to apply logical reasoning skills. The committee cautioned that while they are pleased with the average score of the province, this is not to suggest that every student is performing at an acceptable level. It was recommended that schools and individual teachers continue to monitor the progress of individual students.

DOMAIN 3 Comprehension of Functional Materials

The second aspect of comprehension which was examined was that of comprehension of functional materials. Unlike the classroom oriented materials in Domain 2, these materials were of a practical, utilitarian or functional nature such as might be found outside the classroom. Specific skills in this domain included reading of tables of contents, road signs, maps and labels. A specific example of a comprehension skill in this domain is examining a road map and answering questions on distances and directions shown on the map.

Table 3 and Figure 3 present the results of student performance on Domain 3 relative to acceptable performance in those skill areas.

Table 3

GRADE/YEAR 4 READING ASSESSMENT

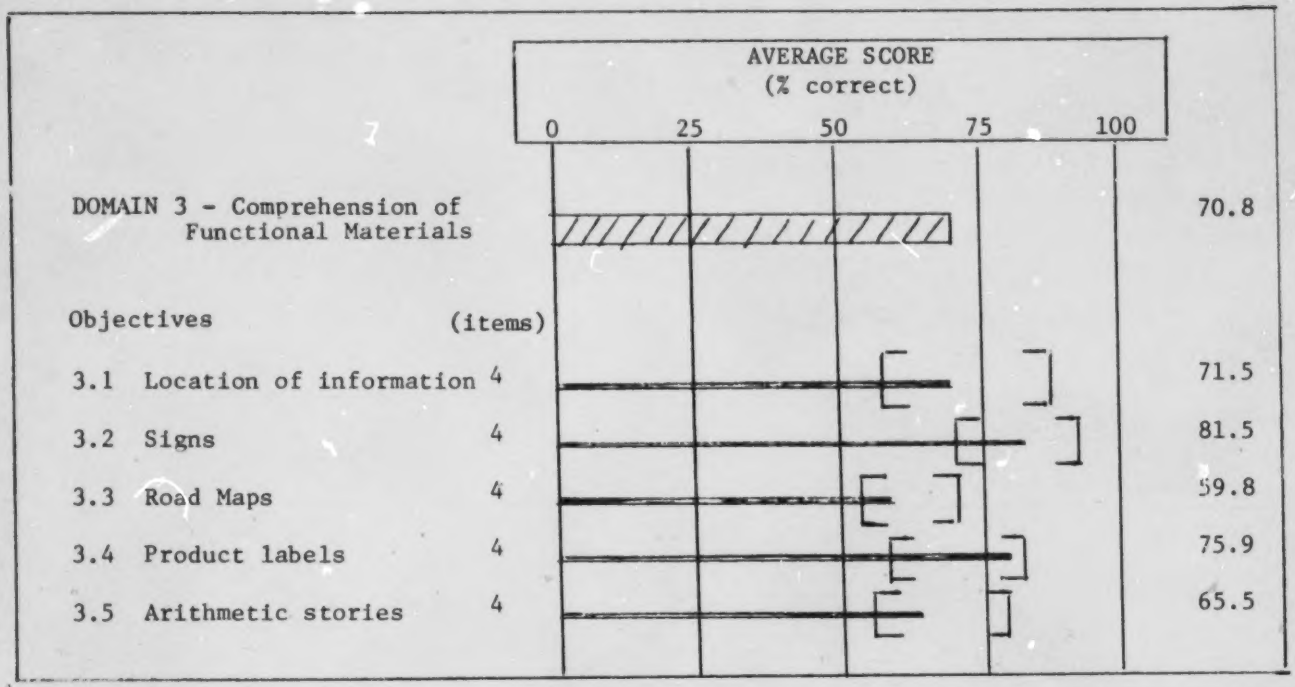
PROVINCIAL RESULTS FOR DOMAIN 3: COMPREHENSION OF FUNCTIONAL MATERIALS

N = 34,626

	Average Score (% correct)	Range of Acceptable Performance as Defined by Panel
Objective 3.1 The student should be able to locate information using such reference aides as tables of contents, titles, and classifications.	71.5	(69-86)
Objective 3.2 The student should be able to understand signs.	81.5	(74-90)
Objective 3.3 The student should be able to understand road maps.	59.8	(55-73)
Objective 3.4 The student should be able to understand product labels.	75.9	(64-80)
Objective 3.5 The student should be able to understand arithmetic story problems.	65.5	(62-78)

Figure 3

GRADE/YEAR 4 READING ASSESSMENT
PROVINCIAL RESULTS BY DOMAIN AND OBJECTIVE
N = 34,626



Discussion:

Domain 3 - Comprehension of Functional Materials

Once again the overall performance in this domain was judged to be acceptable. That is, it appears that children at this age level can read and understand certain functional materials at an acceptable level of proficiency. Locating information, understanding signs, road maps and product labels, understanding arithmetic problems are skills that 9 year old children appear to be learning at an acceptable level of proficiency.

PERFORMANCE BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A number of variables relate to student performance in reading. These characteristics include both personal and situational factors. Student performance will be analyzed and interpreted according to some of these characteristics. For the Grade/Year 4 assessment the variables were:

Sex
Number of Schools attended
Number of hours of T.V. watched
Residence in Canada
Native Language
Age

When examining the results of student performance by these reporting categories, it should be noted that a perceived relationship between performance and a given characteristic does not imply cause and effect. For example, if students who have attended a large number of schools score lower than those who attended fewer schools, this does not imply that the mere transfer from school to school causes student performance to be low. The lowered performance may be due to conditions other than the one being examined, or through some combination of related factors. Since 94 per cent of the student population was tested, it is important to recall that all mean scores presented here are considered as true means for the population. Table 4 presents the basic data of the survey.

SEX

Slightly more boys than girls - 17,622 (50.1%) to 16,793 (49.9%) - participated in the study. Figures 4A, 4B and 4C show student performance according to sex.

Discussion:

In almost all skill areas measured the performance of girls exceeded that of boys. The only exceptions were in dictionary skills in the Word Identification domain and in the Reading of Functional Materials domain where boys scored higher on two of the five objectives. These

Table 4

BASIC DATA: GRADE 4 ASSESSMENT

Total Number of Respondents N = 34,626

		N	%
Sex			
	Males	17,622	50.9
	Females	16,793	48.5
Age			
	7	10	.0
	8	561	1.6
	9	27,558	79.6
	10	5,459	15.8
	11+	787	2.3
Schools Attended			
	1	15,061	43.5
	2	9,824	28.4
	3	4,914	14.2
	4+	4,359	12.6
Born in Canada?			
	Yes	29,242	84.5
	No	4,322	12.5
No. of Years in Canada	<1	400	1.2
	1	300	.9
	2	627	1.8
	3+	3,336	9.6
Language other than English Before School?	Yes	7,480	21.6
	No	26,287	75.9
Only English Spoken at Home?	Yes	21,370	61.7
	No	12,660	36.6
Read Another Language?	Yes	3,849	11.1
	No	29,794	86.0
Do You Watch T.V.?			
	Yes	32,449	93.9
	No	1,079	3.1
No. of Hours of T.V.	<1	4,333	12.5
	1	4,231	12.2
	2	5,936	17.1
	3	5,632	16.3
	4+	12,786	36.9

findings are in keeping with results reported elsewhere[1] where for this age group, girls out-perform boys in reading skills. Reasons for these differences are not entirely clear.

---

[1] See, for example: NAEP Newsletter, National Assessment of Educational Progress, VOL. VIII, October 1975.

FIGURE 4A

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF SEX OF STUDENTS

N(Boys) = 17,622
N(Girls) = 16,793
Missing Data = 211

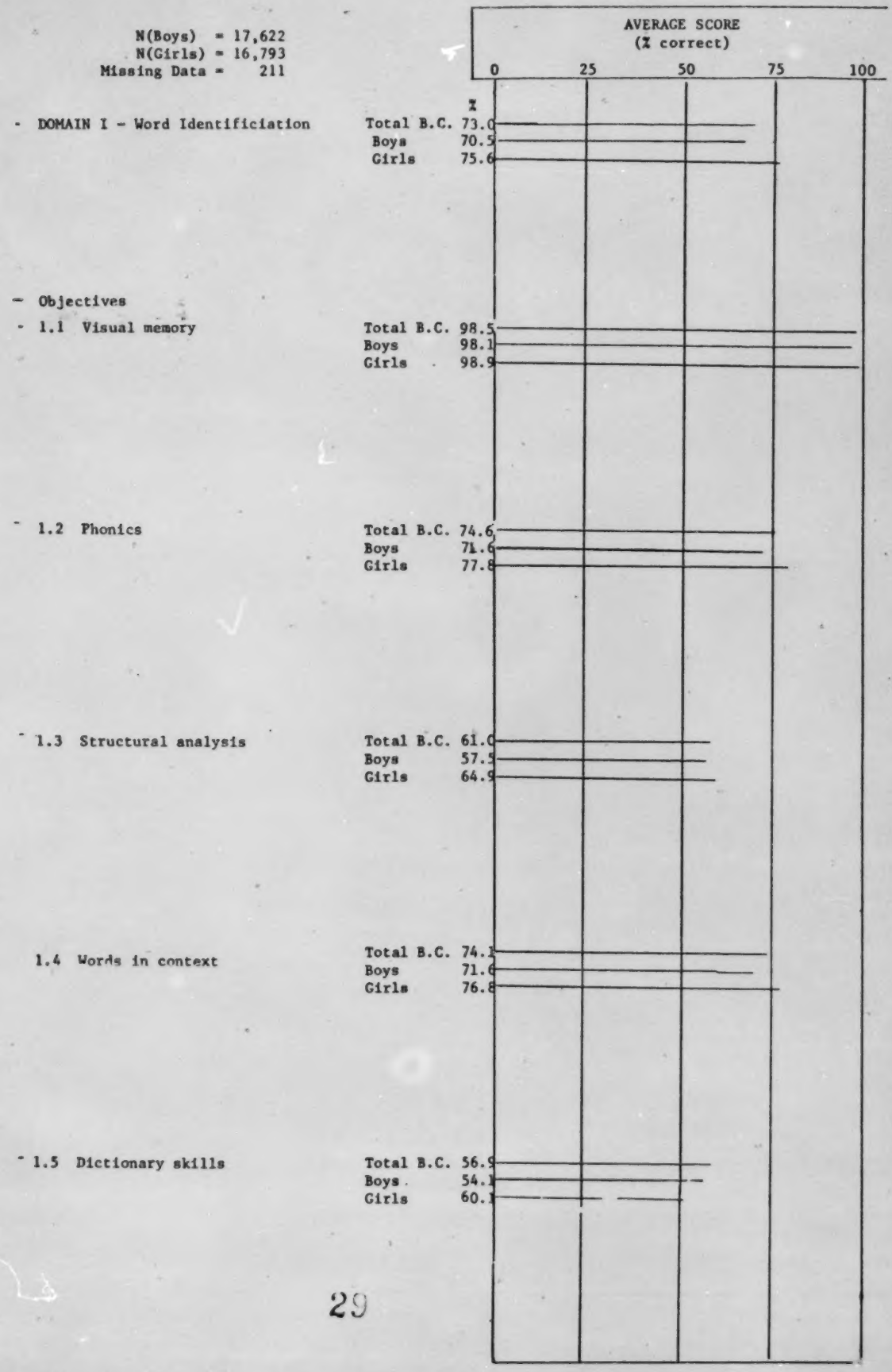
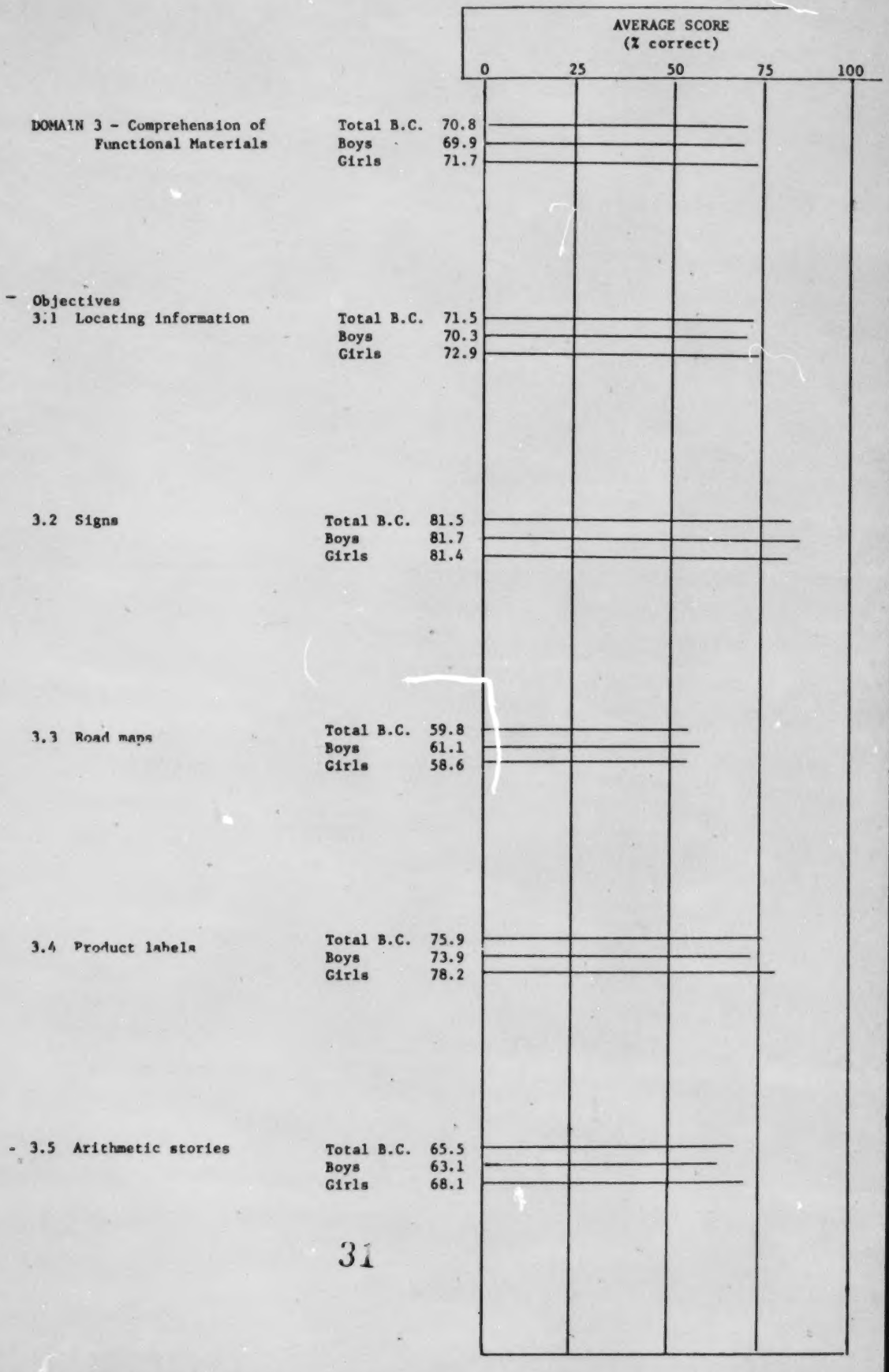


FIGURE 4B

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF SEX OF STUDENTS

FIGURE 4C
READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF SEX OF STUDENTS



NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ATTENDED

There is a common belief among teachers that frequent moves from school to school or district to district adversely affect learning. To determine the relationship of this factor to reading performance, students were asked to indicate the number of schools they had attended since they began Grade 1. Figure 5A shows the distribution of students according to the number of schools attended. Figures 5B, 5C and 5D show student performance according to mobility.

Discussion:

Student performance decreased consistently with an increase in the number of schools attended and presumably the number of communities in which students have lived. This finding bears out the experiences and opinions of teachers with regard to negative relationship between frequent moves and the quality of student performance. However, caution should be used in interpreting these findings. It may not be the mere fact of moving to another school that results in lessened performance as much as it could be various emotional and social factors associated with the move, or perhaps the instability of the family or even the family's socio-economic status. What this finding suggests, therefore, is that children who move frequently should be given special consideration in a developmental reading programme because, for whatever reason, they may perform at a lower level than their peers.

More than one-half of the students in the sample have changed schools in the first 3 grades, with over one-quarter attending three or more schools. This suggests that relatively large numbers of children in our elementary schools will require special consideration because of mobility related influences bearing upon them.

N(1 School) = 15,061 (44.1%)
N(2 School) = 9,824 (28.8%)
N(3 School) = 4,914 (14.4%)
N(4 School) = 4,359 (12.7%)

Total = 34,159
Missing Data = 467

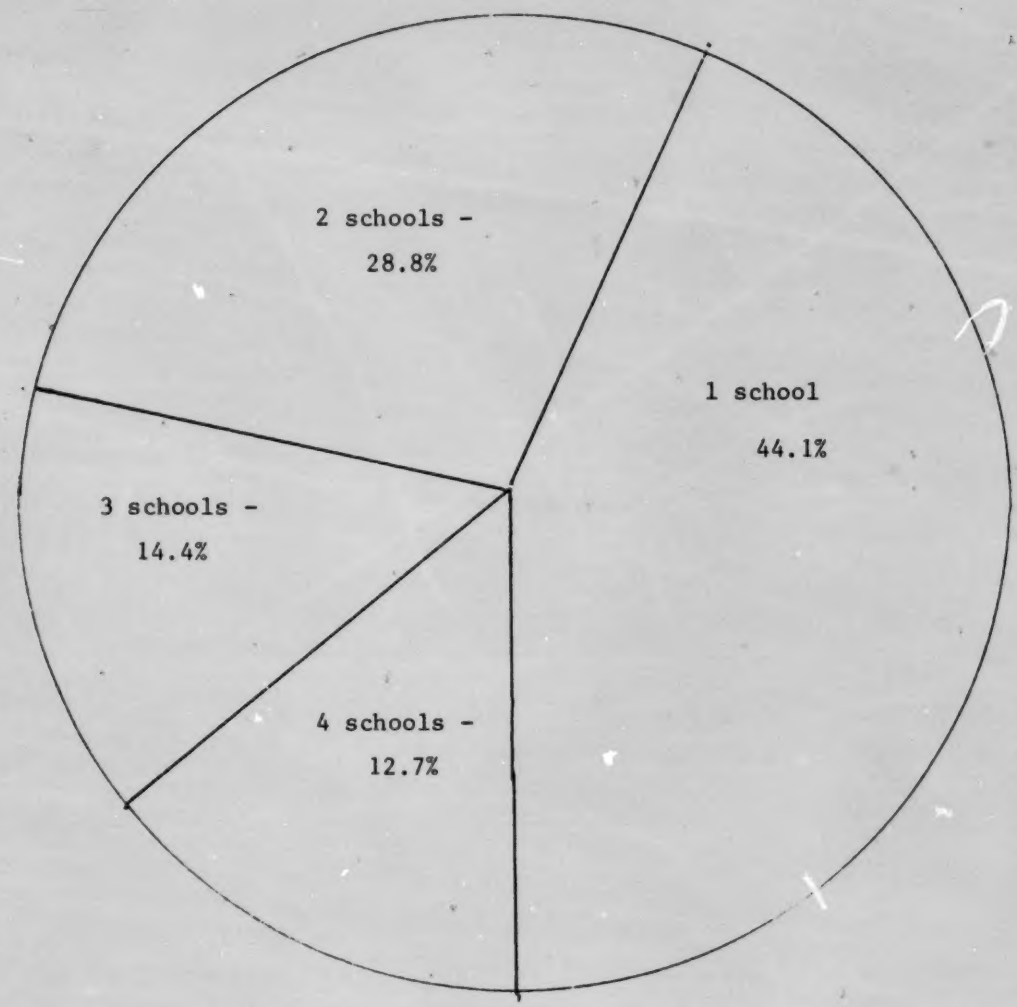
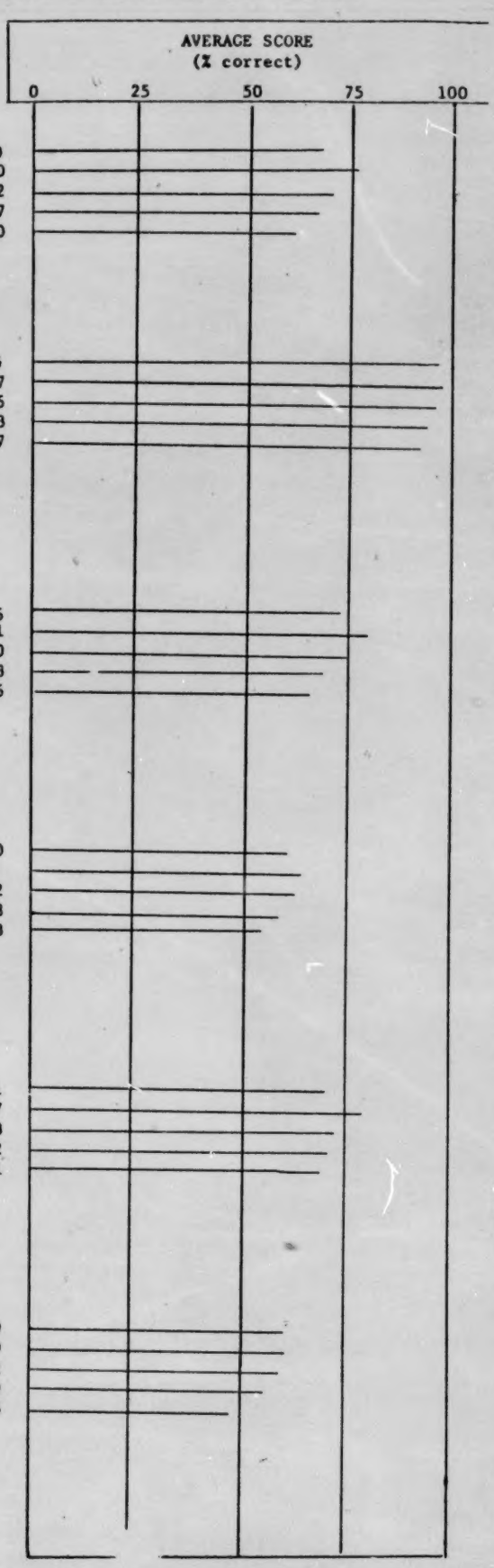


Figure 5A - Number of Schools attended.

FIGURE 5B

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ATTENDED

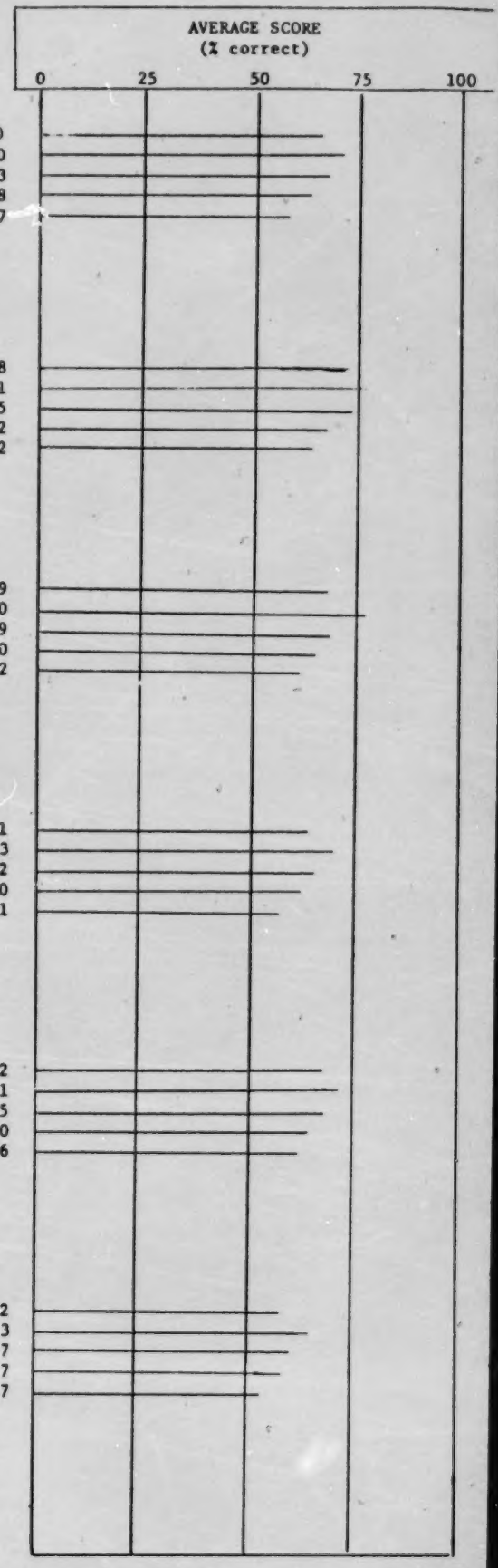
N(1) = 15,061
N(2) = 9,824
N(3) = 4,914
N(4+) = 4,359
N(missing) = 467



DOMAIN I - Word Identification	Total B.C.	73.0
	One	75.0
	Two	73.2
	Three	71.7
	Four	68.0
Objectives		
1.1 Visual memory	Total B.C.	98.5
	One	98.7
	Two	98.6
	Three	98.3
	Four	97.7
1.2 Phonics	Total B.C.	74.6
	One	77.1
	Two	75.0
	Three	72.3
	Four	68.6
1.3 Structural analysis	Total B.C.	61.0
	One	
	Two	61.2
	Three	59.8
	Four	54.3
1.4 Words in context	Total B.C.	74.1
	One	75.7
	Two	74.3
	Three	73.2
	Four	70.1
1.5 Dictionary skills	Total B.C.	56.9
	One	59.9
	Two	57.2
	Three	54.9
	Four	49.5

FIGURE 5C

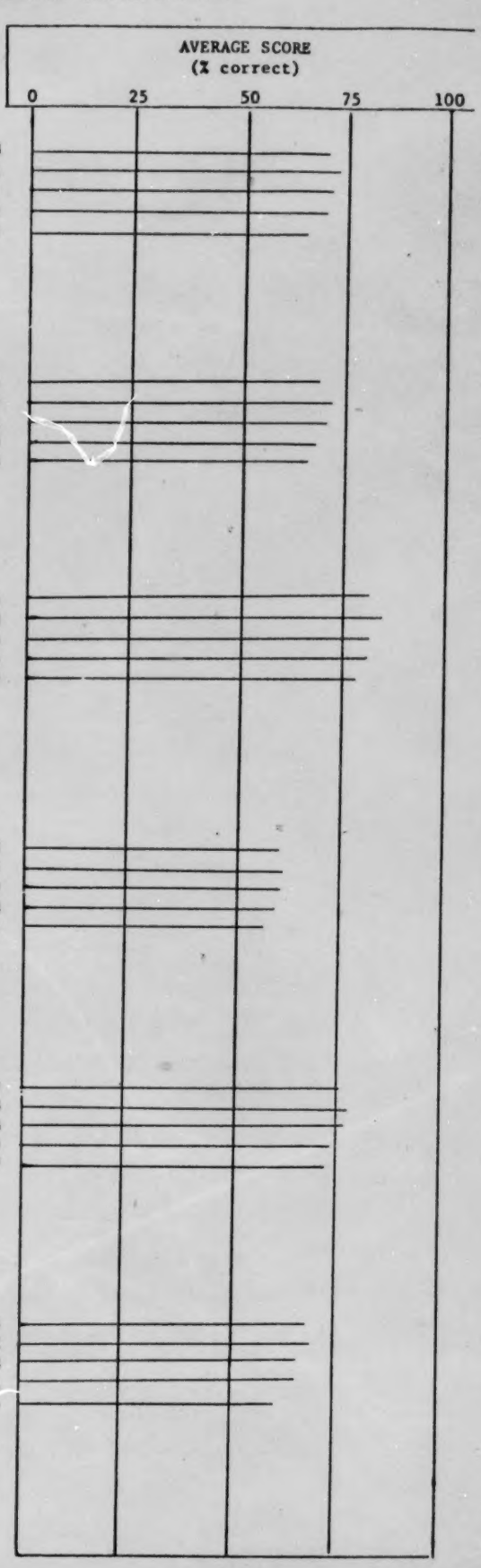
READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ATTENDED



DOMAIN 2 - Comprehension of Prose Materials	Total B.C.	69.0
	One	71.0
	Two	69.3
	Three	67.8
	Four	63.7
Objectives		
2.1 Main ideas	Total B.C.	72.8
	One	75.1
	Two	73.5
	Three	71.2
	Four	66.2
2.2 Important details	Total B.C.	73.9
	One	76.0
	Two	73.9
	Three	73.0
	Four	69.2
2.3 Sequence	Total B.C.	67.1
	One	69.3
	Two	67.2
	Three	66.0
	Four	62.1
2.4 Logical reasoning	Total B.C.	70.2
	One	72.1
	Two	70.5
	Three	69.0
	Four	65.6
2.5 Purpose	Total B.C.	61.2
	One	63.3
	Two	61.7
	Three	59.7
	Four	55.7

FIGURE 5D

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ATTENDED



DOMAIN 3 - Comprehension of Functional Materials	Total B.C.	70.8
	One	72.8
	Two	70.9
	Three	69.3
	Four	66.3
Objective		
3.1 Locating information	Total B.C.	71.5
	One	73.6
	Two	72.1
	Three	70.0
	Four	65.8
3.2 Signs	Total B.C.	81.5
	One	83.3
	Two	81.5
	Three	80.5
	Four	77.9
3.3 Road maps	Total B.C.	59.8
	One	61.2
	Two	59.9
	Three	59.3
	Four	56.4
3.4 Product labels	Total B.C.	75.9
	One	78.3
	Two	76.3
	Three	73.9
	Four	70.7
3.5 Arithmetic stories	Total B.C.	65.5
	One	68.2
	Two	65.3
	Three	63.1
	Four	60.4

NUMBER OF HOURS OF T.V. WATCHED

The effect of T.V. upon reading has been generally believed to be negative. T.V. is considered to take the child away from books - to reduce the amount of time he pratices reading, as well as to reduce his motivation to read. To determine the relationship between performance on basic reading skills and T.V. habits, students were asked to indicate the amount of time spent watching television the evening before the test was taken. Figure 6A presents the distribution of students in terms of the number of hours T.V. watched. Figures 6B, 6C and 6D present the results.

Discussion:

The data reveals an interesting outcome regarding the relationship between hours of T.V. watched and performance on the test. There is generally an increase in performance in reading with an increase in T.V. watched up to 2 hours per day, then a slow decrease to the 4 or more hours per day category. However, at this highest category student performance is still equal to or higher than performance in the No T.V. category. The act of watching T.V. does not appear to interfere with development of reading skills. This result may be due to the increased interests generated by T.V. and subsequent reading about these interests. Or, this effect may come about as a result of a broadened informational and linguistic basis developed by the child as a result of watching T.V. Also, T.V. may not contribute directly to the noted increase in reading performance. For example, children who have time to watch T.V. may also have much time for reading. Because of the somewhat unexpected but highly definite pattern, the relationship between T.V. and skill development in reading and other language areas might bear much examination.

Distribution of time spent watching T.V. is also noteworthy. Over 50% of the Grade 4 students watch 3 or more hours of T.V. daily, which is about 1/2 of the time spent in school. Only a very small proportion watch no T.V. Because of this kind of time usage, much more should be known about the effect of T.V. upon students' intellectual and skill development and the ways in which this medium could be best employed for educational purposes.

N(No T.V.)	=	1,079 (3.3%)
N(< 1 hr.)	=	4,207 (12.7%)
N(1 hr.)	=	4,107 (12.4%)
N(2 hr.)	=	5,778 (17.5%)
N(3 hr.)	=	5,491 (16.6%)
N(4 hr.)	=	12,435 (37.6%)
Total		33,097
Missing Data		1,529

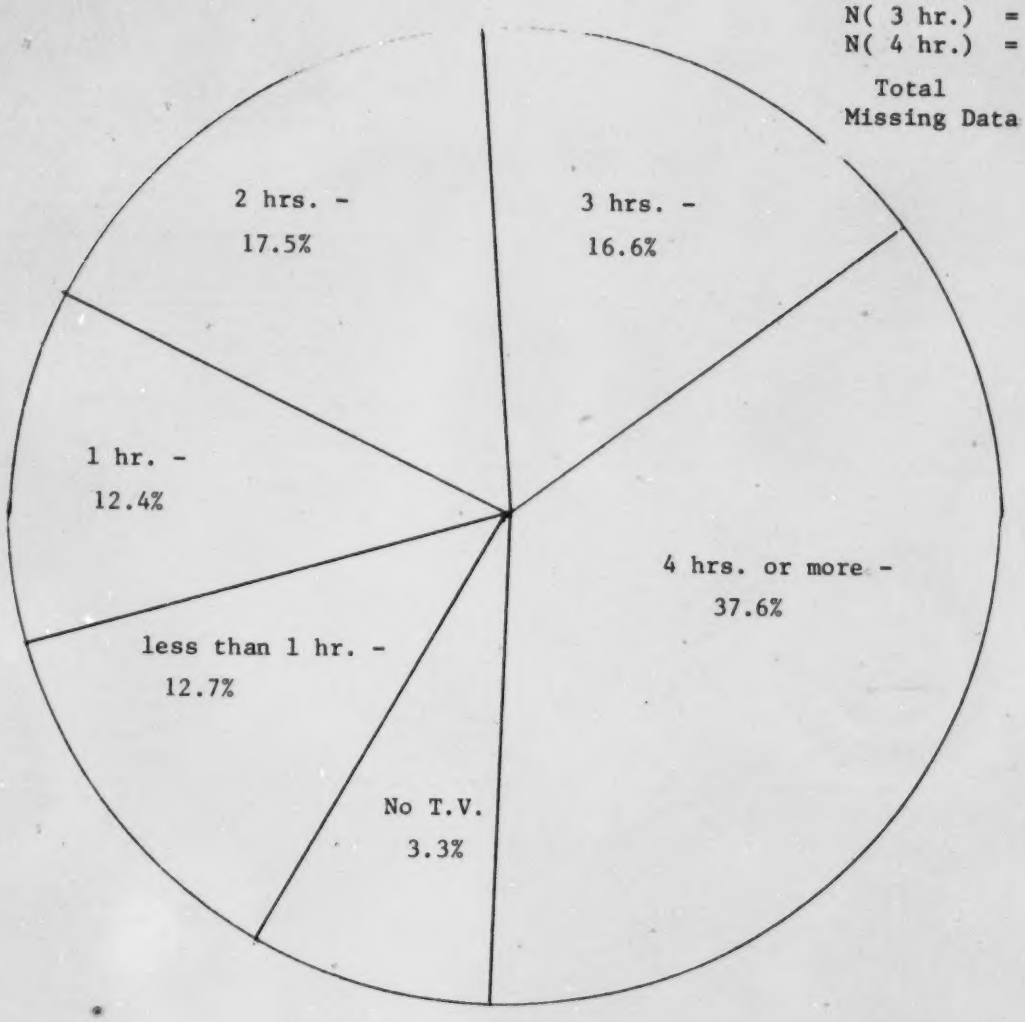
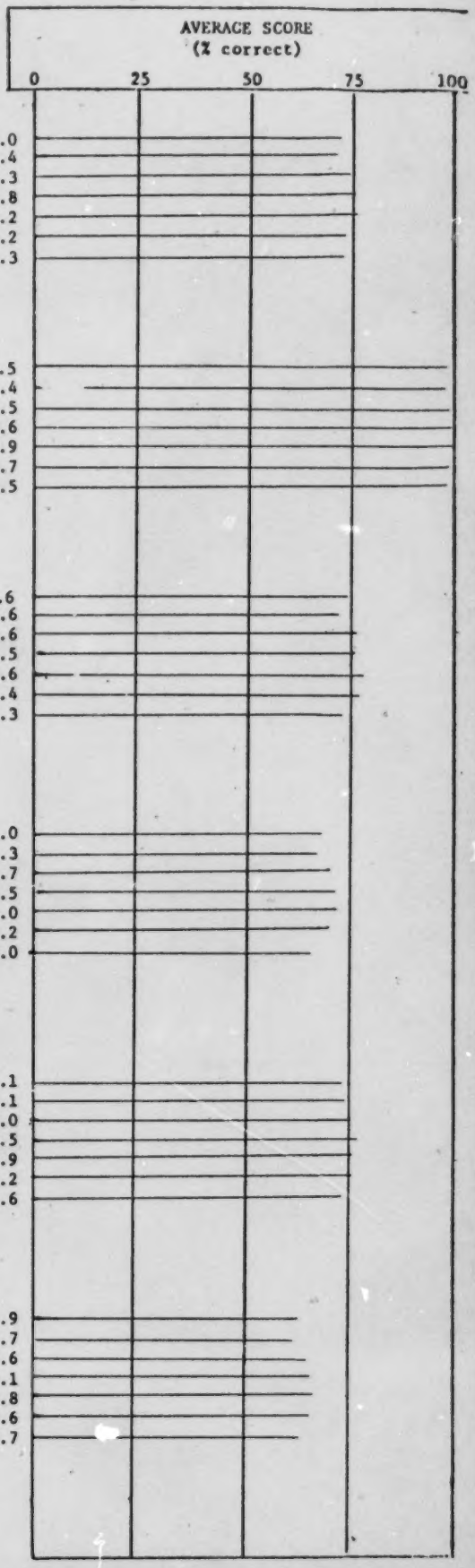


Figure 6A - Number of Hours of T.V. Watched

FIGURE 6B

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF HOURS OF T.V. WATCHED

N(No T.V.) = 1,079 N(3) = 5,491
N(<1) = 4,207 N(4+) =12,435
N(1) = 4,107 Missing
N(2) = 5,778 data = 1,529



DOMAIN I - Word Identification	Total R.C.	73.0
	No T.V.	71.4
	< 1 Hr.	74.3
	1 Hr.	74.8
	2 Hr.	75.2
	3 Hr.	74.2
	4 Hr. +	71.3
Objectives		
1.1 Visual memory	Total R.C.	98.5
	No T.V.	97.4
	< 1 Hr.	98.5
	1 Hr.	98.6
	2 Hr.	98.9
	3 Hr.	98.7
	4 Hr. +	98.5
1.2 Phonics	Total R.C.	74.6
	No T.V.	72.6
	< 1 Hr.	76.6
	1 Hr.	76.5
	2 Hr.	77.6
	3 Hr.	76.4
	4 Hr. +	72.3
1.3 Stuctural analysis	Total R.C.	61.0
	No T.V.	59.3
	< 1 Hr.	62.7
	1 Hr.	63.5
	2 Hr.	64.0
	3 Hr.	62.2
	4 Hr. +	59.0
1.4 Words in context	Total R.C.	74.1
	No T.V.	72.1
	< 1 Hr.	75.0
	1 Hr.	76.5
	2 Hr.	75.9
	3 Hr.	75.2
	4 Hr. +	72.6
1.5 Dictionary skills	Total R.C.	56.9
	No T.V.	55.7
	< 1 Hr.	58.6
	1 Hr.	59.1
	2 Hr.	59.8
	3 Hr.	58.6
	4 Hr. +	54.7

FIGURE 6C

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF HOURS OF T.V. WATCHED

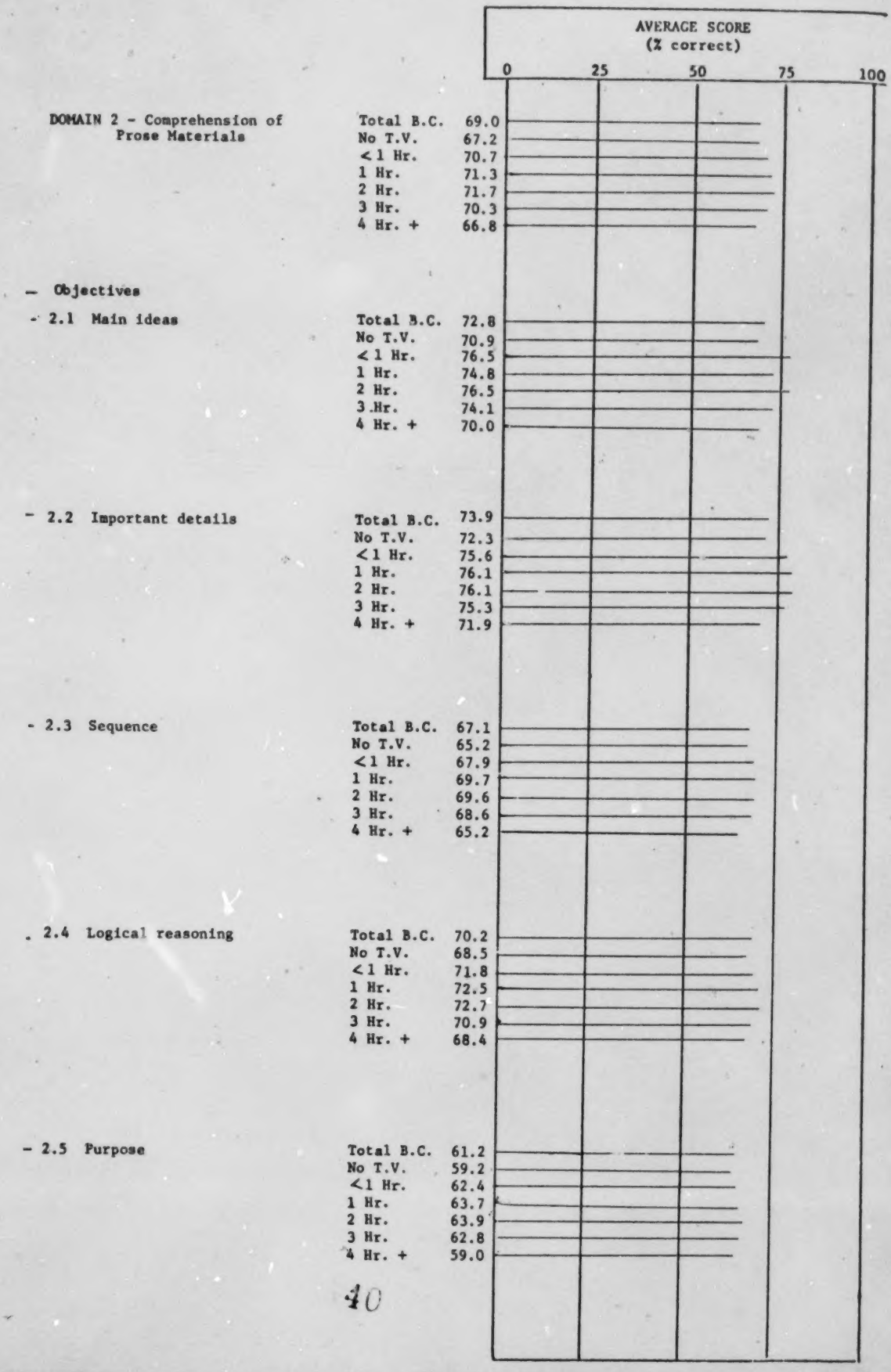
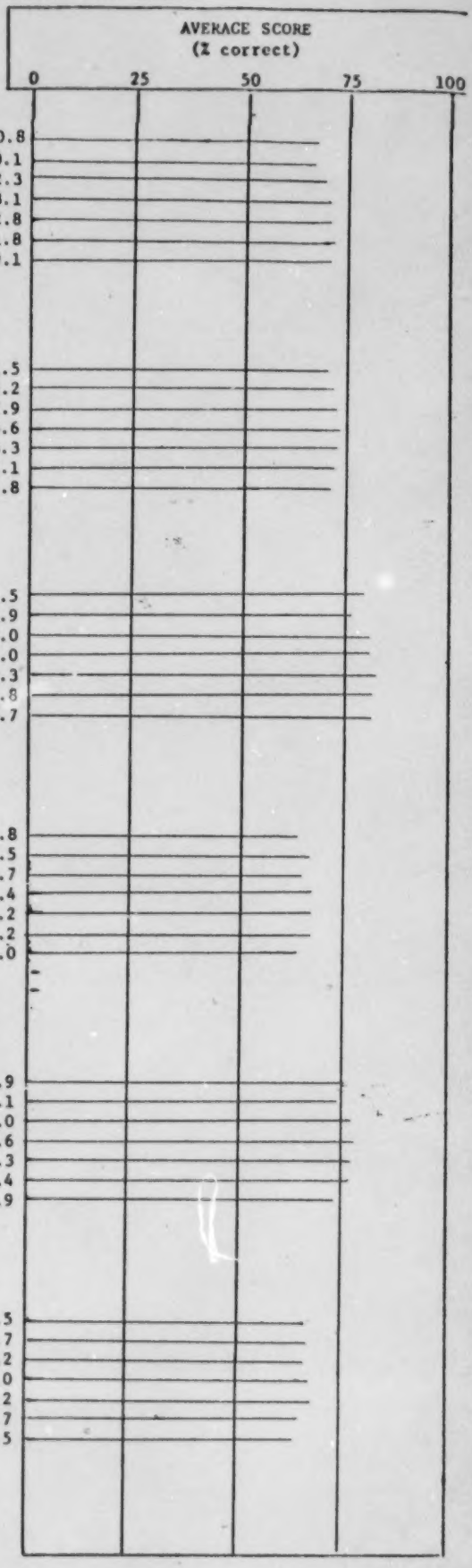


FIGURE 6D

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF HOURS OF T.V. WATCHED



DOMAIN 3 - Comprehension of Functional Materials	Total B.C.	70.8
	No T.V.	70.1
	< 1 Hr.	72.3
	1 Hr.	73.1
	2 Hr.	72.8
	3 Hr.	71.8
	4.Hr. +	69.1
Objectives		
3.1 Located information	Total B.C.	71.5
	No T.V.	72.2
	< 1 Hr.	72.9
	1 Hr.	73.6
	2 Hr.	73.3
	3 Hr.	72.1
	4 Hr. +	69.8
3.2 Signs	Total B.C.	81.5
	No T.V.	76.9
	< 1 Hr.	83.0
	1 Hr.	83.0
	2 Hr.	83.3
	3 Hr.	81.8
	4 Hr. +	80.7
3.3 Road maps	Total B.C.	59.8
	No T.V.	61.5
	< 1 Hr.	60.7
	1 Hr.	62.4
	2 Hr.	61.2
	3 Hr.	61.2
	4 Hr. +	58.0
3.4 Product labels	Total B.C.	75.9
	No T.V.	74.1
	< 1 Hr.	78.0
	1 Hr.	78.6
	2 Hr.	78.3
	3 Hr.	77.4
	4 Hr. +	73.9
3.5 Arithmetic stories	Total B.C.	65.5
	No T.V.	65.7
	< 1 Hr.	67.2
	1 Hr.	68.0
	2 Hr.	68.2
	3 Hr.	66.7
	4 Hr. +	63.5

RESIDENCE IN CANADA AND LANGUAGE SPOKEN

Figure 7A presents the distribution of students by residence and language. Figures 7B, 7C and 7D present the findings.

Discussion:

Noticeable shifts in performance accompanied changes in variables concerned with place of birth and language spoken at home. Students born in Canada who did not speak another language before going to school and who speak only English at home showed the highest performance, exceeding significantly in all cases the average performance in the province. Their scores were closely followed by the scores of those students not born in Canada but who speak only English at home. Just below these students in performance were those who were born in Canada, who spoke another language before going to school and where English is not the only language spoken at home.

Students not born in Canada who were able to speak another language before going to school and who speak another language besides English at home, on the whole, scored significantly lower than the average for the province. However, the longer the students have resided in the country, the closer their scores were to the provincial average. For these students the ability to read another language does not appear to be associated with higher reading performance.

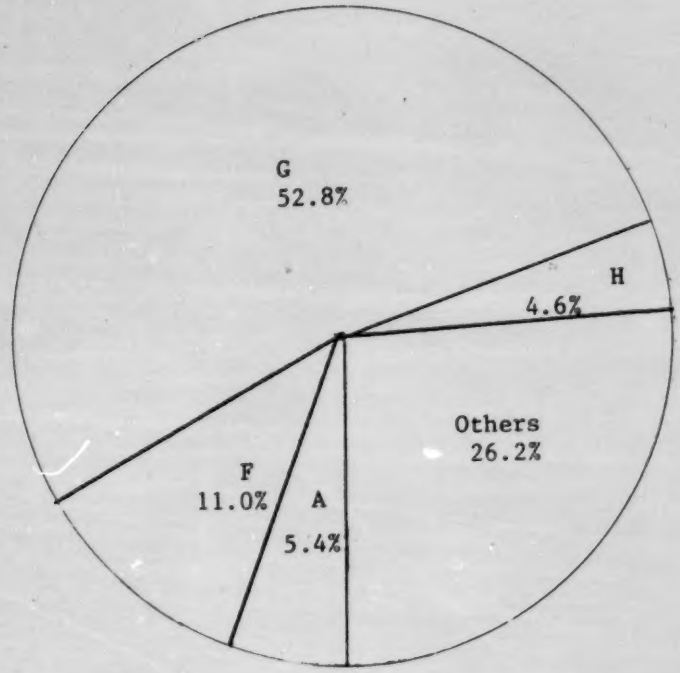
These results suggest, as we might expect, that the ability to read English is associated with the kind and extent of experience with English as a spoken language and the length of residence in this country. Other factors such as self-esteem and socio-economic variables associated with place of birth and use of English in the home may also affect reading performance. It does appear, however, that children most familiar with the English language and Canadian customs are the most proficient readers. For this reason,

increased attention and assistance should be provided to newly-arrived immigrant children whose reading education needs are great.

In the distribution of students by residence and language about 53% (Group G) of the students were born in Canada, did not speak another language before going to school and speak only English at home. It is important to note that about 16% (Group A & Group F) were able to speak another language before school and come from homes where English is not the only language spoken.

Figure 7A

RESIDENCE IN CANADA
AND LANGUAGE SPOKEN



N(A)	=	1,763	(5.4%)
N(B)	=	206	Subset of A
N(C)	=	277	
N(D)	=	1,237	
N(E)	=	741	
N(F)	=	3,582	(11.0%)
N(G)	=	17,183	(52.8%)
N(H)	=	1,491	(4.6%)
Others	=	8,541	(26.2%)
Total		32,560	
Invalid		2,066	

LEGEND

A - Not born in Canada
- Able to speak another language before school
- English not the only language spoken at home

B - as in A but 1 year or less in Canada
C - as in A but about 2 years in Canada
D - as in A but 3 or more years in Canada
E - as in A but also able to read another language

F - Born in Canada
- Spoke another language before going to school
- English not the only language spoken at home

G - Born in Canada
- Did not speak another language before going to school
- Only English spoken at home

H - Not born in Canada
- Did not speak another language before going to school
- Only English spoken at home

FIGURE 7B

RESIDENCE IN CANADA AND LANGUAGE SPOKEN

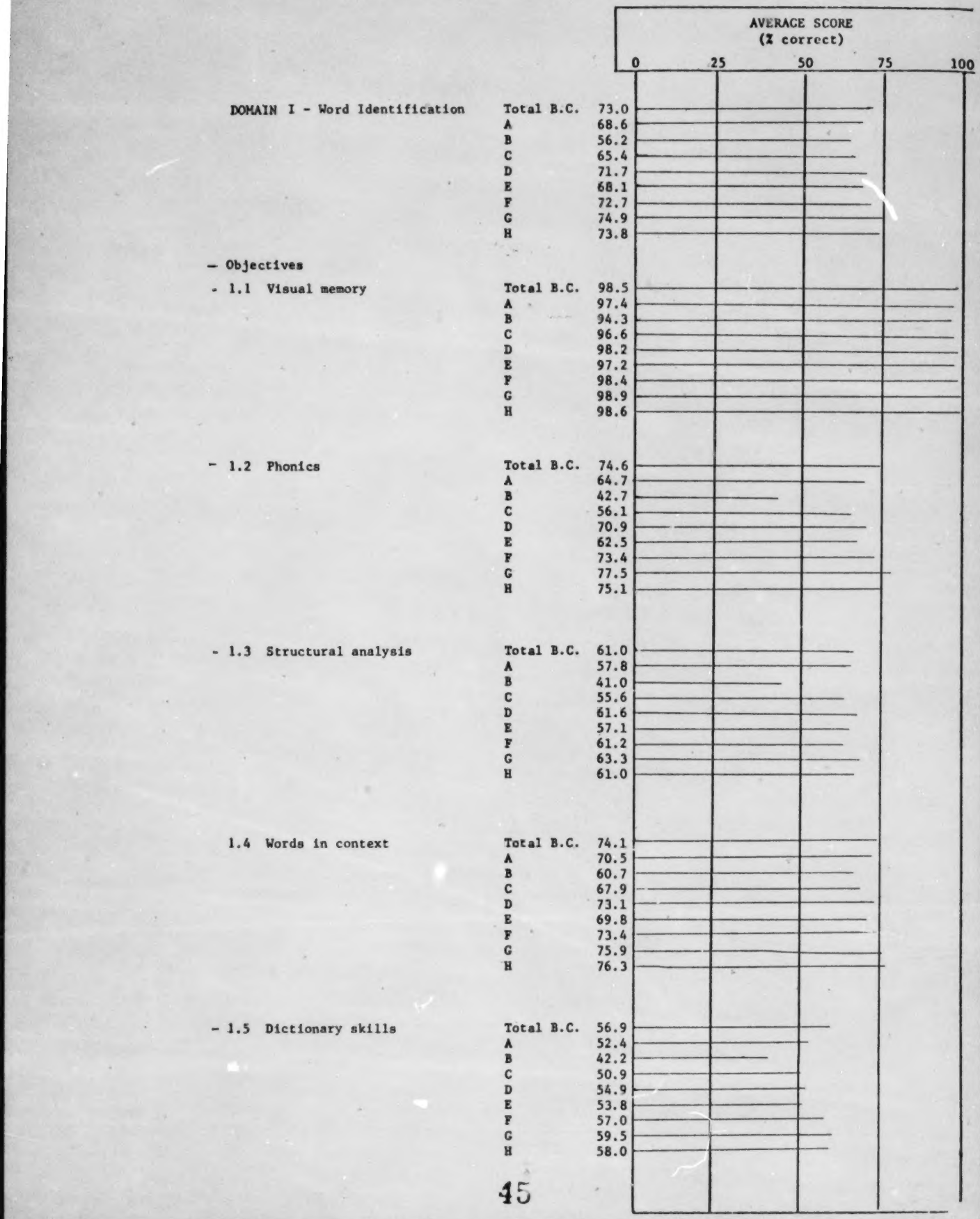


FIGURE 7 C

RESIDENCE IN CANADA AND LANGUAGE SPOKEN

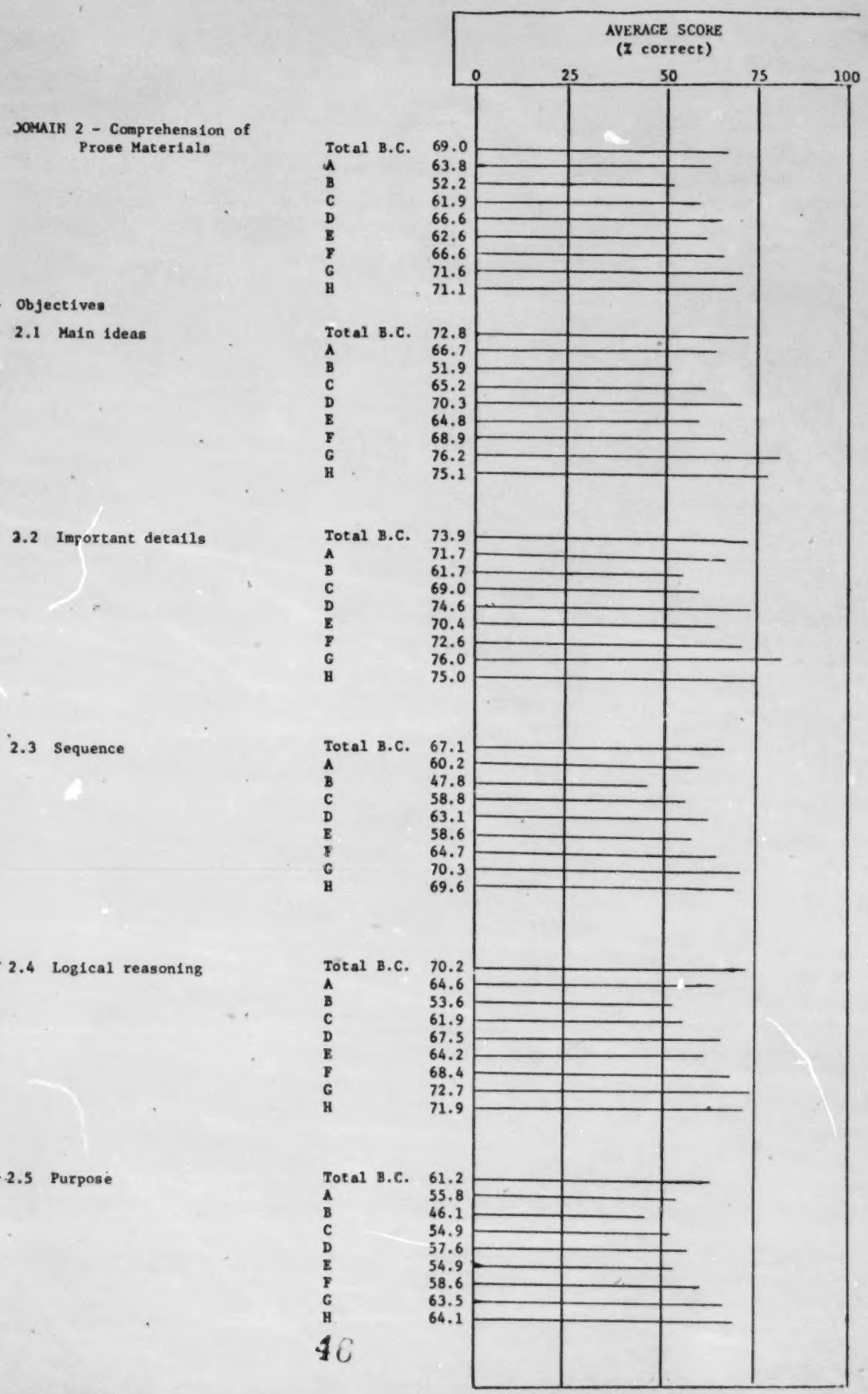
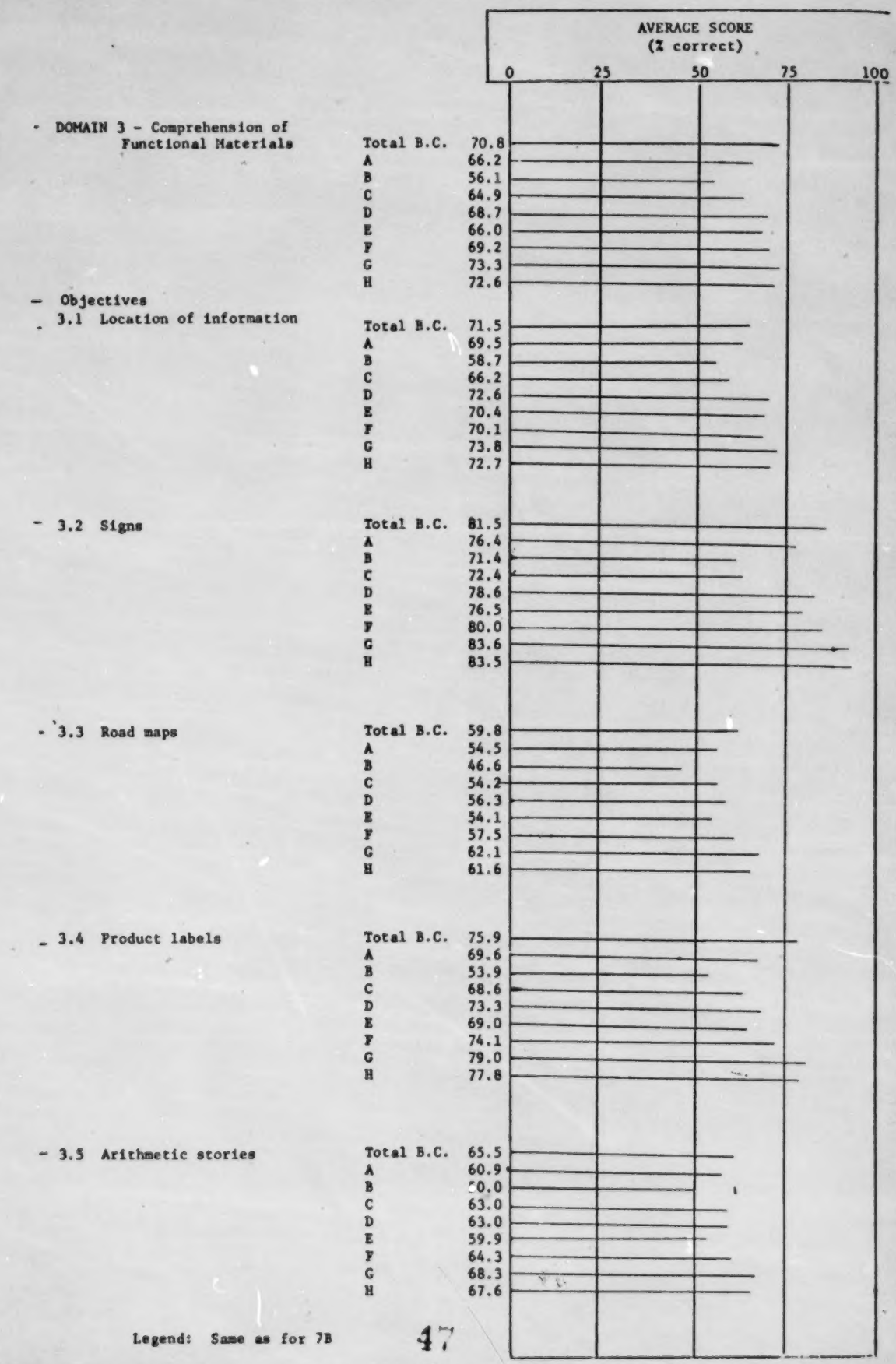


FIGURE 7D

RESIDENCE IN CANADA AND LANGUAGE SPOKEN



Legend: Same as for 7B

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF AGE

To determine how the variable of age affects performance in reading, students' ages were recorded and set against their scores on the test. Figure 8A presents the student distribution according to age. Figures 8B, 8C and 8D present the findings.

Discussion:

The greatest majority of students were in the nine year old category. However, this was not the highest performing group. Those relatively few students in the under nine group exceeded the performance of all other students at this level while those over nine were dramatically lower in their scores in all areas tested.

This seeming inconsistency may be due to personal and educational characteristics of the students. The youngest students (approximately 1.7% of the total sample) may be the few precocious children who are occasionally admitted to Grade 1 early, while the over nine students (approximately 17.6% of the total) may include students who have learning difficulties and are repeating the grade. Because of the very small numbers involved in the under nine group, their performance should be interpreted with caution.

Performance in reading appears to be related to the age of the student with younger students outperforming older ones.

N(<9)	= 571	(1.7%)
N(9)	= 22,558	(80.1%)
N(>9)	= 6,246	(18.2%)
Total	34,375	
Missing	251	

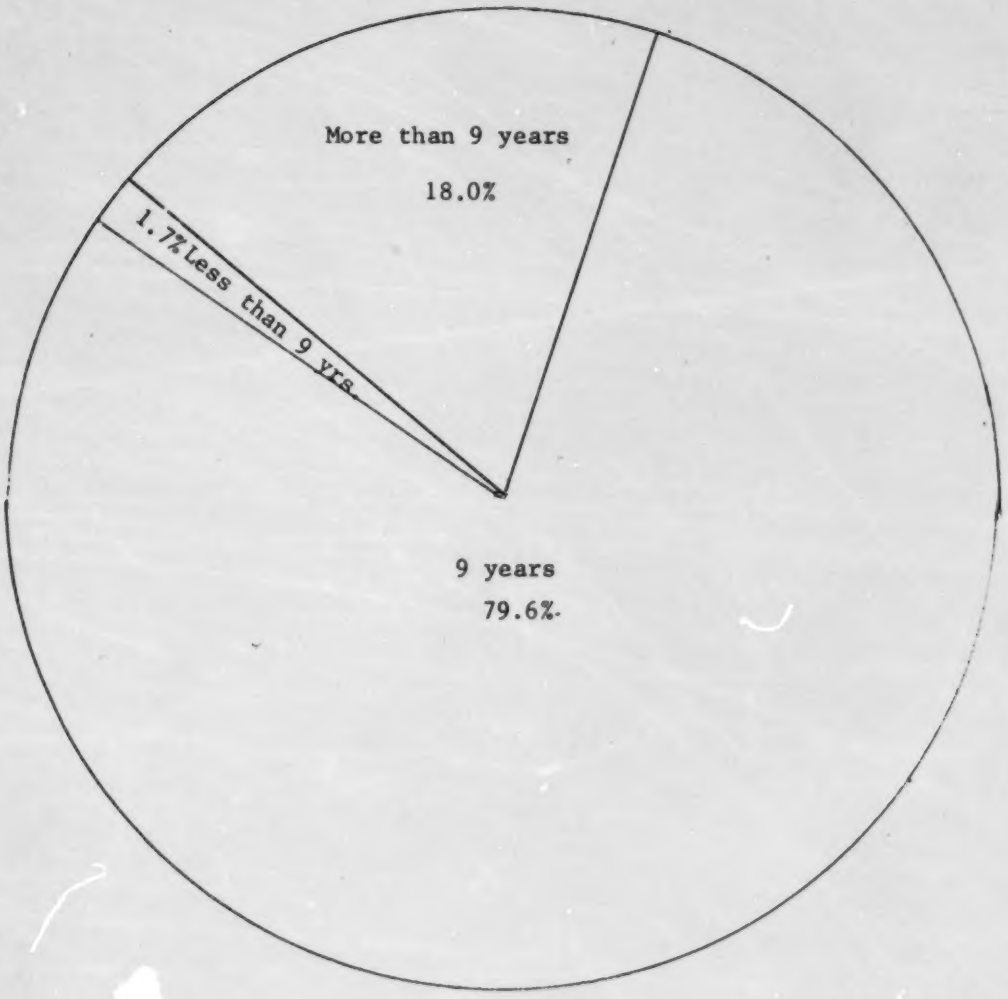


Figure 8A - Distribution by Age

FIGURE 8B

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF AGE

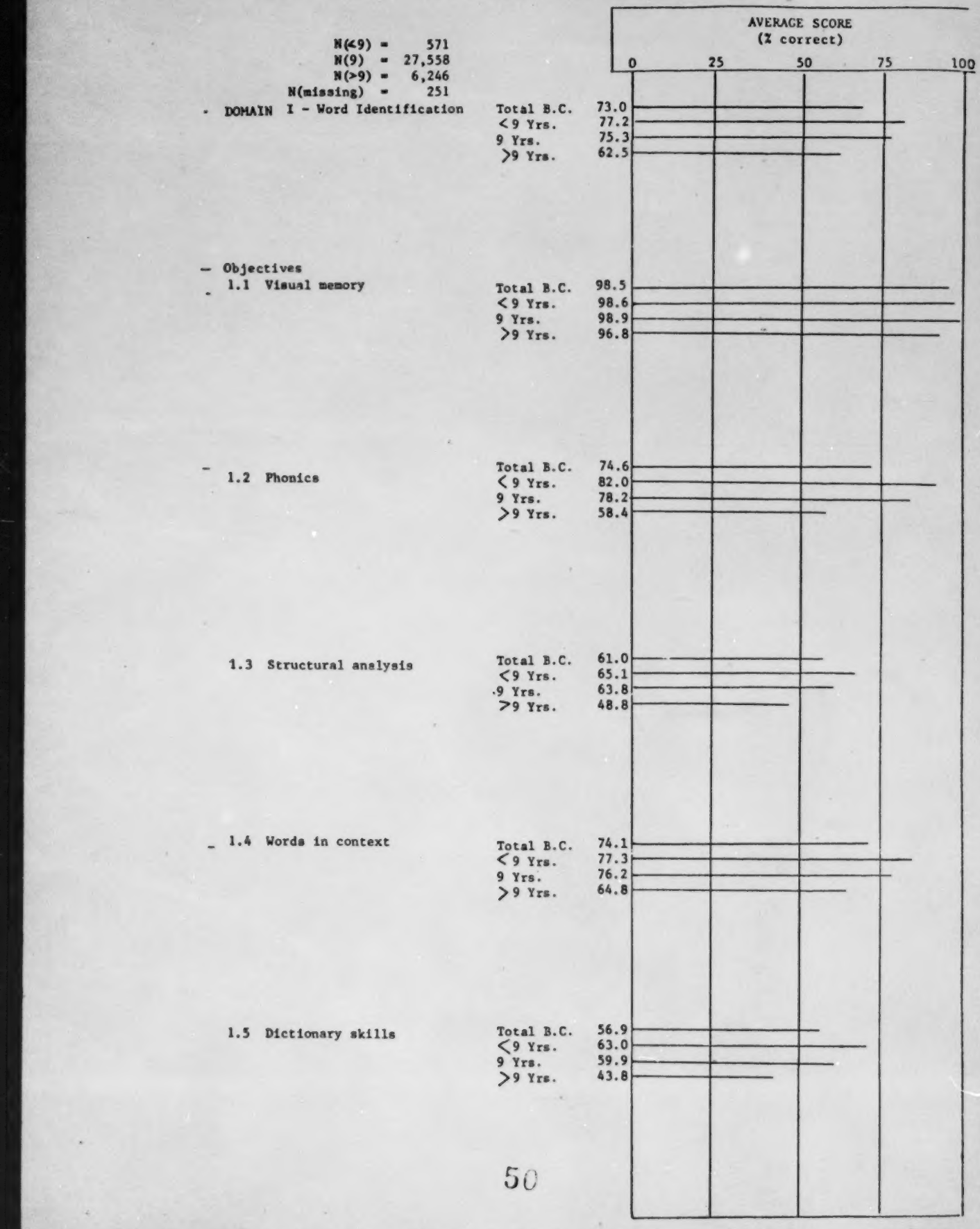


FIGURE 8C

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF AGE

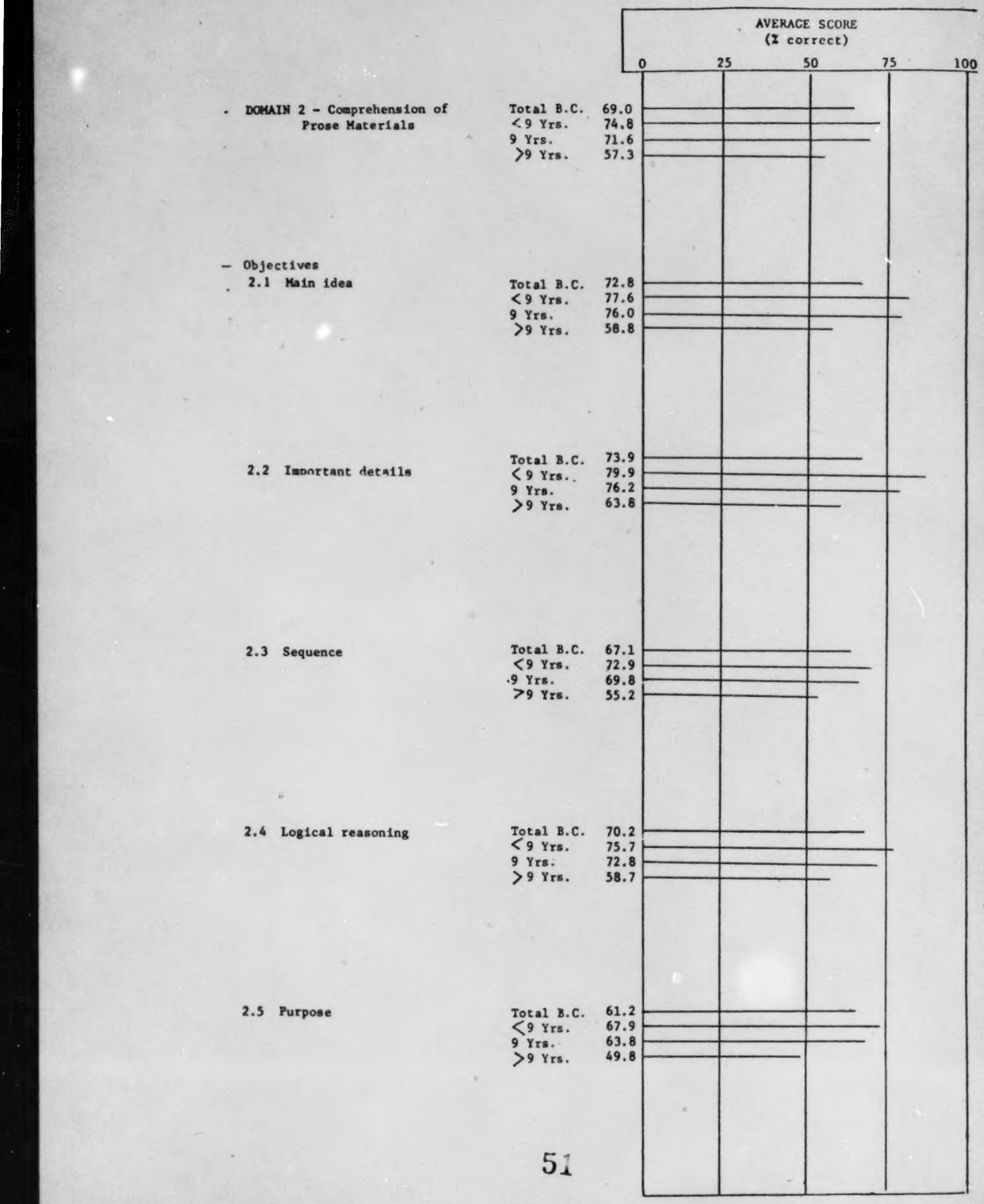
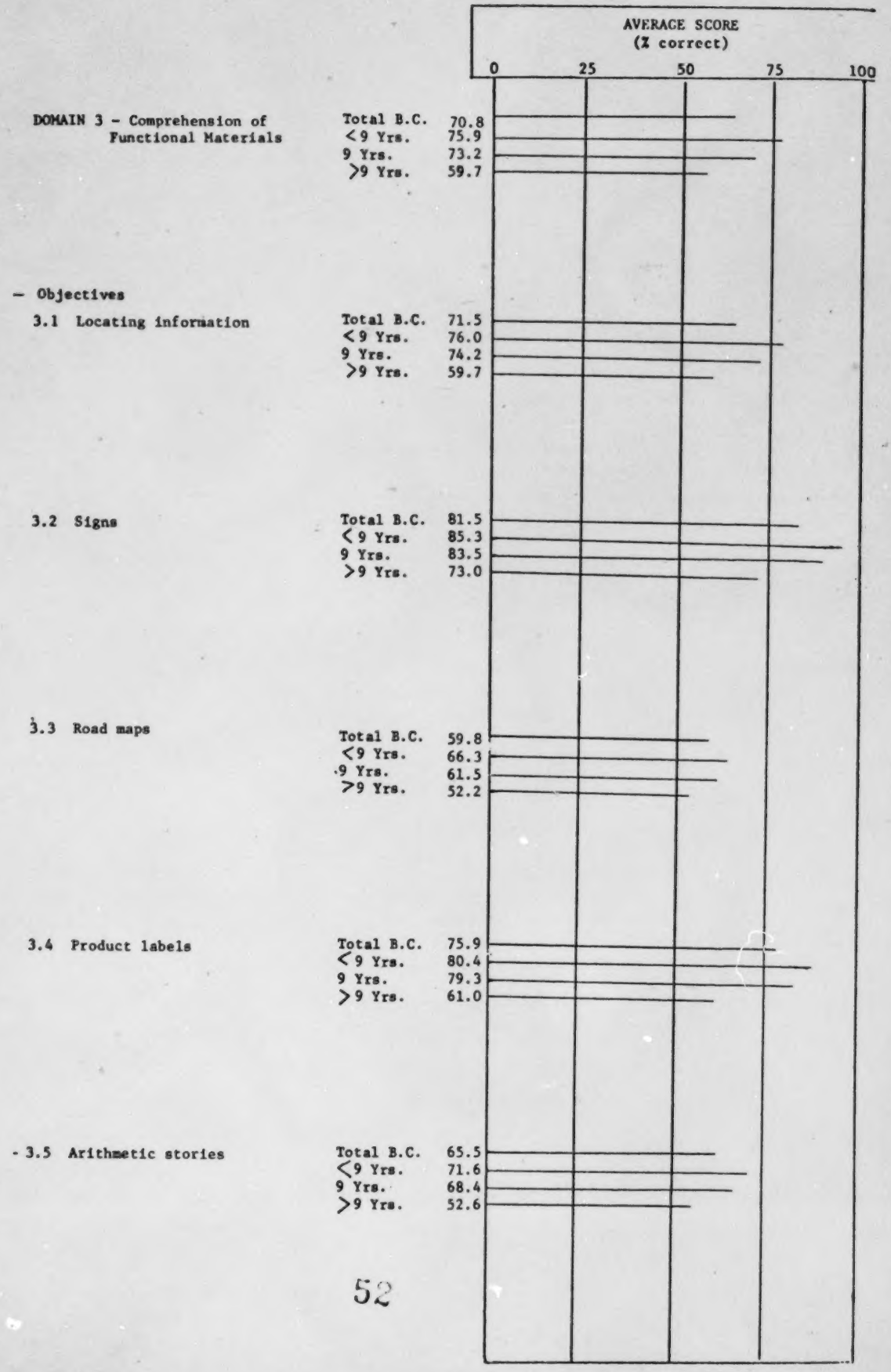


FIGURE 8D

READING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF AGE



SUMMARY

Aside from the problem noted in the use of dictionary skills, the review panel felt that the British Columbia Grade 4 student population is performing at a satisfactory level in Reading as measured by the test and defined by the panel.

All student characteristics identified for this assessment appeared to be related to variations in student performance, largely along expected and traditional lines. In summary, the findings are:

- girls outperform boys.
- the more schools attended the lower the reading performance.
- the more T.V. watched, up to 2 hours, the better the reading performance - from 2 to 4 hours performance drops but at 4 hours matches or exceeds performance in the No T.V. category.
- Native born Canadians score higher than non natives.
- Solely English speakers score higher than non-English speakers.
- Younger students (9 and under) out-perform older (over 9) students.

(It is important to reiterate that a perceived relationship between performance and a given characteristic does not imply cause and effect, since conditions other than those identified may cause the performance variations.)

The most unexpected result was the apparent relationship between T.V. and reading, with all other findings generally confirming previous results such as in National Assessment of Educational Progress. It would appear that certain experiences or circumstances connected with T.V. have a beneficial effect on skill development in reading. More investigation of this relationship is needed. The other findings reveal the special needs of children in special circumstances such as high mobility or non-English speaking categories. Appropriate curriculum decisions must be made for these special cases.

Teachers at all levels, Gr. 1, 3 and 7, generally agreed on the importance of reading goals as discussed in parts of the Main Report,* considering all worthy of inclusion in a developmental reading programme. The most important goal of an ideal programme at the Grade 1 and 3 levels was "Uses Phonics", while Grade 7 teachers identified "Locates Information" as the most important. This agreement appears to have resulted in an effective programme of students at the Grade/Year 4 level was judged by a review panel to be adequate in all but one area (dictionary skills). This deficiency may be a result of the relative newness of this skill area in the experience of Grade/Year 4 students.

The fact of adequate performance by the "typical" student does not mean that all students at this level in all parts of the province are performing satisfactorily. There are many students who are not capable of performing reading tasks at their grade level and these must be identified and aided to reach their individual potentials. These results do, however, indicate that in terms of the agreed-upon goals of instruction in reading and on the basis of the performance assessment carried out, students at the Grade/Year 4 level in B.C. are on the whole able to read satisfactorily. Teachers, therefore, appear to be meeting their curriculum goals in reading instruction.

Information from the section of the survey dealing with instructional practices reveals that teachers desire more precise guidelines for their reading programmes. These guidelines might help teachers meet local and individual needs of children even better than is now the case. In addition, teachers favour a wide range of instructional resources. The provision of desired and appropriate resources would also serve to improve instruction in all respects and might lead to student performance which exceeds general expectations. Even though performance in reading is generally satisfactory, teachers evince a low regard for teacher preparation programmes in reading. Improved programmes should, once more, lead to better instruction. Finally, as noted in the Report Dealing with Instructional Practices, Chapter 3, a concerted attack by educators at all levels upon the problem areas in the

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* Report Dealing with Goals, Learning Assessment Programme, Department of Education, Victoria, B.C. 1976.

implementation of reading programmes such as the development of an appropriate reading curriculum, the improvement of reading in content fields and the preparation of suitable materials should also produce positive effects in students

INTERPRETATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on its review of the Reading Test results, and on related discussion on reading instruction in general, the reading review panel arrived at certain interpretations and implications. The observations and comments from panel members are supported by findings and conclusions of the survey team presented in the Parts 1 and 2 of the Main Report and are also reported here. All observations are of concern to educators at various levels. These include curriculum development personnel, teacher educators, the professional organization and local district personnel.

A. General Issues

1. Since skills in reading are developed and measured on the basis of precise instructional goals, *Language Arts objectives should be clearly developed and sequenced through the grades at the provincial level. A bank of test items could be available to assess these objectives.*

2. Due to the relatively restricted view of the scope of the reading programme as seen in the "Report Dealing with Goals" and the reading test, *the scope of objectives should be broadened to include such aspects as critical reading and functional application.*

3. Because of the continuing difficulties as seen by teachers and curriculum developers of imposing an appropriate sequence upon the development of reading skills, *curriculum objectives should be based on realistic knowledge of children's abilities and needs (e.g. do Year 4 children need skill in diacritical marking in dictionary usage?)*

4. In that teachers perceived university courses in reading methodology to be in need of reexamination and in that teachers appeared to view the reading programme in somewhat restricted or limited terms with respect to scope of objectives,
   (a) *the balance of theory and practice in reading education programmes should be examined. Faculties of Education should ensure that all*

future teachers, particularly elementary teachers, are trained in both theory and practice of developmental reading.

(b) assistance should be given to school districts and schools in the development of effective professional development programmes with an emphasis on a) goals clarification and b) objective-development and c) formulation of appropriate instructional practices and assessment procedures.

5. **Considering that teachers in the questionnaire expressed need for more varied and appropriate materials and the specific nature of skill development in reading at the elementary level,**

(a) simple, basic, objective-referenced pratice materials should be developed at the provincial/district levels.

(b) provision should be made for manipulative or non-text materials (e.g. materials to develop mapping skills).

(c) a resource book for reading at the elementary level should be developed at the provincial level to consolidate individual teacher materials based on a) objectives; b) readability; and c) interest.

6. **Because children's reading performance at the Grade/Year 4 level is adequate and since there has been the use of a broadening range of instructional pratices (individualization, language experience. etc.),** *innovations in reading instruction should be encouraged, based on an essential core of learning goals.*

7. **In that a number of student characteristics identified in this report are indicative of special needs of children:**

a) teachers should plan skill and concept development in reading to provide for an appropriate sequence and degree of learning for all.

b) students in the categories identified should receive special attention in terms of instructional and material matters, as suggested in this report.

c) school staffs should discuss year by year and group by group expectations so that appropriate performance is required of all students.

8. **Since student variables appear to affect student performance,** *relevant information and suggestions for members of the community designed to further development of reading and other language skills should be made available through schools and other appropiate channels.*

B. **Research: Questions for Further Study**

1. **Due to the important nature of the problems raised in the course of the reading assessment, and identified by the review panel, the following issues should be addressed:**

   a) *What is the optimum time for introducing specific skills or applications (e.g. dictionary usage)?*

   b) *What is the provincial profile in terms of how many students scored at each percentile?*

   c) *Do children really need specific, structured skill development (e.g. phonics) in order to begin reading? How much emphasis needs to be placed on decoding?*

   d) *Is there a paper and pencil method of validly measuring higher level reading and thinking skills?*

   e) *Can a future reading assessment obtain valid information correlating pupil attitudes toward reading with pupil skills in reading?*

   f) *What instructional practices provide optimal skill development in reading:*
      (a) on an overall basis?
      (b) in terms of specific student needs?

   g) *What instructional materials provide optimal skill development on reading:*
      (a) on an overall basis?
      (b) in terms of specific student needs?

h) What is the sequence of skill development in reading:
(a) at the primary level?
(b) at the intermediate level?

i) What corrective and remedial practices are most effective in what cases of reading difficulty?

j) What form and sequence of teacher education activities develop optimum teacher knowledge of and skill with the theory and practice of reading instruction?

2. In that the student characteristics identified in this study appear to be related to variations in student performance, *further investigation should be undertaken to discover whether a cause and effect relationship exists.*

3. Due to the apparently positive nature of the identified relationship between T.V. and reading, *further investigation of the causal effects of T.V. upon reading, and ways of using this medium for skill development in reading, should be undertaken immediately.*

4. Because the student characteristics identified in the present study appear to be related to variations in student performance, *investigation should be undertaken to determine if and how these characteristics work together to affect performance.*

5. Due to the potentially wide range of personal and social variables affecting student performance, *empirical research should be undertaken to determine the nature and effect of other variables affecting reading performance.*

COMPOSITION

GRADES 8 AND 12

CHAPTER 2

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the results of the writing assessment conducted in B. C. secondary schoold during January 1976. A total of 1870 Grade 8 students in 76 English 8 classes and 1826 Grade 12 students in 74 English 12 classes were surveyed, the sample drawn at randon from throughout the province. "Assessment Procedures and Problems" details the methods used in designing and administering the test.

The next two sections, "Overall Results" and "Performance by Student Characteristics", provide the results of the marking in tabular form with brief discussions. The second of these sections concerns the attempt to obtain results according to various aspects of student backgrounds, such as age, sex, language background and television viewing habits. "Teacher Methods, Materials and Backgrounds" draws on material from other parts of the LANGUAGE: B. C. project in order to explore possible relationships between what teachers believe they are or should be doing in the classroom and what the students achieved in their writing sample. Finally, the "Summary and Conclusions" and "Implications and Recommendations" sections examine the points raised by the preceding material and offer specific recommendations concerning the teaching of composition in the secondary schools.

Three appendices contain the instructions to students and teachers, the instructions for markers, and the marking results in terms of their statistical reliability.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND PROBLEMS

Development of the Survey. Considerable time was spent by both the Survey Team and the Management Committee in trying to design a test that would accurately assess basic writing skills at grades 8 and 12. A composition several paragraphs in length was required, one that would allow for:

1) the valid and reliable measurement of a representative sample of student writing at both the grade eight and twelve levels;
2) the measurement of five specific skill areas: idea generation, organization, sentence usage, vocabulary, and mechanics;
3) the use of an expository mode that would reveal the students' abilities to amplify, explain and reason in ways that would be measureable; and
4) the use of a single topic to allow for comparisons to be drawn within and between the two groups.

It was agreed that the topic must be broad enough to allow students to develop their own ideas, but within the framework of a single area so that the general quality of ideas about the topic could be determined. Two topics and various methods of administration were pre-tested in four secondary classes in Saanich and Castlegar, then later in four classes in Saanich, Burnaby and Richmond. As a result of teacher comments and student papers from these two pilot studies, the final topic and method were determined.

Administration of the Survey. A random sample[1] of almost 3700 students (1870 in Grade 8, 1826 in Grade 12) was drawn from 76 English 8 and 74 English 12 classes from across the province. A booklet, containing the topic, paper for writing, and an information sheet was provided for each student whose anonymity, however, was preserved. In addition, a set of instructions and a request for comments about the assessment was mailed to the administering teachers.

The compositions were to be written during a 90-minute period, to be apportioned as follows:

10 minutes - introduction: explanation of survey
20 minutes - pre-writing discussion
50 minutes - writing time
10 minutes - answering "general information" section.

Teachers were cautioned to use the pre-writing discussion as a means of generating ideas and opinions in a very general way rather than in attempting to focus on the specific topic; guidelines and suggestions for the procedure were presented in the instructions. It was felt that such time, a normal part of most school writing assignments, would put the students more at ease and allow them to exhibit their typical skills. The directions for both grade levels were: "You are to write a composition (a piece of writing several paragraphs in length) in which you tell about the most interesting or exciting thing that you have seen, heard, read, or imagined in the past few years. You should give reasons and specific examples that will help the reader to understand your topic."

The survey was administered, depending on individual scheduling, during the week of January 5-9, 1976. Most teachers reported little difficulty with the administration procedures, although a few felt that the pre-writing discussion directions needed perhaps even more focus. Several teachers at both levels felt that the writing time could be divided more efficiently by cutting down on the pre-writing session and alloting specific time for re-writing and proofreading; some suggested that two periods might be used for assessment, and a few thought that the time of year, just after the

---

[1] A stratified sampling design was used in the selection of classes. However, in light of the low variability among class weights and the lack of significant differences between strata, a simple random design was deemed more effecient from a statistical and cost point of view in the analysis of results.

Christmas holidays, was not conducive to the students' best work. A common comment among Grade 12 teachers was that the time allotted did not allow for the students to demonstrate their skills properly. Many suggested that the "general information" questions could be completed before the assignment began.

Most of the teacher comments centered on the topic itself. Several Grade 8 teachers thought it was too general or vague; they offered several suggestions about lists of specific topics or even a reading assignment to be followed by paragraph answers. Several also felt that the majority of Grade 8 students would not be familiar with an essay assignment of such length. Finally, some teachers believed that such an assessment should cover much more material by including separate sections on grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, reading skills, and paragraphs.

Grade 12 teachers who responded on the comment form also felt that the topic was vague and that separate sections to test various skills should be included. (It should, perhaps, be noted that teachers were not apprised of the marking methods to be employed.) Several suggested that a list of specific topics would be necessary in order to achieve the calibre of expository prose expected at this level. One teacher even specified additional categories such as "imagination, creativity, depth and breadth of content, humorously, seriously, etc., and to do it well". Another commented that, due to type of assignment, the results could be biased toward the student who is instantly creative.

Generally, however, the teachers at both levels thought that the survey was fair and that the intent was commendable. Some Grade 8 teachers felt that their class groups (being remedial or otherwise streamed) might not be true samplings. Several Grade 12 teachers felt that some students may not have taken the assignment too seriously (because the papers were anonymous and would not count toward their grades) and may, therefore, have done less than their best work. Teachers at both levels agreed on the need for their receiving feedback on the results of the survey.

The Marking Checklist. At the same time as the survey itself was being tested, the Survey Team and the Management Committee were developing an instrument that could provide objective results from the essentially subjective procedure of evaluating a written essay. After six major revisions, the Marking Checklist (p.66) was devised to identify the specific writing skills which the survey was designed to measure. The Checklist combines both subjective and objective (or descriptive) means of evaluation in each of the five major areas: ideas, organization, sentence development and usage, vocabulary, and mechanics. The marker provides marks on a nine-point scale (1 = excellent) for each of the five major areas (items 35, 50, 64, 74, and 85) and for the overall effectiveness of the paper (item 86). Each of the major areas has one or more central questions (italicized) which require a "yes-no" response usually as to the paper's effectiveness or acceptability. Finally, each area lists a number of problems or sub-skills which may occur in the essay, to be ticked off as required. The one-page format was seen as flexible enough to allow any teacher to approach the marking of a paper according to his own method while still providing a description of the paper's strengths and weaknesses as well as a subjective ranking or evaluation.

Marking Procedures. A group of 35 Grade 8 and Grade 12 teachers, representing a varied range of age, experience, and geographic location, was selected by the Department of Education. They met during the week of February 16-20, 1976, to do the marking. Before then, they had been supplied with copies of the Checklist, a summary of the criteria to be applied (see Appendix), and sample student compositions. The session opened with a morning period spent discussing the Checklist and the criteria, followed by the marking and discussion of three sample papers. The actual grading began that afternoon and continued for three more days. The final day was spent in discussing the methods used, the Checklist, and the student papers, and making recommendations for changes.

In an effort to maintain some kind of consistency among markers, occasional sessions were used for common marking of single papers throughout the week. In addition, a number of papers were duplicated and re-cycled through the markers in a random manner so that

LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
VICTORIA, B. C. 1976

CHECKLIST FOR MARKING COMPOSITIONS

Ranking of overall effectiveness [ ] 86

Paper Number [ ] 87 [ ] 88 [ ] 89 [ ] 90

1. IDEAS

Has a developed argument or thesis [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 25

Ideas are:

- imaginative or unique 0_{26}
- commonplace 0_{27}
- trite 0_{28}

Ideas are formed:

- clearly 0_{29}
- inconsistently 0_{30}
- vaguely 0_{31}

Ideas are presented:

- interestingly 0_{32}
- mechanically 0_{33}
- ineffectively 0_{34}

Ranking of effectiveness of ideas [ ] 35

2. ORGANIZATION

The essay shows a clear organizational pattern [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 36

If no, because it fails to:

- present ideas in an effective order 0_{37}
- use clear transitions 0_{38}
- maintain a consistent point of view 0_{39}
- build to an effective conclusion 0_{40}

Appropriate substantiation is evident [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 41

If no, major problems are:

- lack of examples to illustrate ideas 0_{42}
- padding or repetition 0_{43}
- underdeveloped (short) 0_{44}

Individual paragraphs are well developed [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 45

If no, major problems are:

- lack of logical development 0_{46}
- poor transitions 0_{47}
- lack of examples to support points 0_{48}
- poorly developed examples 0_{49}

Ranking of organization [ ] 50

3. SENTENCE DEVELOPMENT AND USAGE

Sentence structure is acceptable [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 51

Sentences are clear [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 52

The following errors recur:

- fragmented sentences 0_{53}
- fused sentences 0_{54}
- faulty subordination/coordination 0_{55}
- faulty pronoun references 0_{56}
- misplaced modifiers 0_{57}
- faulty subject-verb agreement 0_{58}
- inconsistent tense 0_{59}

Sentence structure is sophisticated [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 60

If yes, because writing includes:

- effective rhetorical devices 0_{61}
- a variety of sentence patterns 0_{62}
- precise and concise phrasing 0_{63}

Ranking of sentence development, usage [ ] 64

4. VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is acceptable [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 65

If no, because of:

- frequent use of wrong words 0_{66}
- inappropriate use of slang 0_{67}
- overly elaborate language 0_{68}
- low level of vocabulary 0_{69}

Vocabulary is sophisticated [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 70

If yes, because:

- figurative language is used effectively 0_{71}
- word choice is varied effectively 0_{72}
- words are used precisely 0_{73}

Ranking of vocabulary [ ] 74

5. SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, AND HANDWRITING

Spelling is acceptable [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 75

If no, because of misspelling:

- difficult words 0_{76}
- common words 0_{77}

Punctuation is acceptable [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 78

If no, because of misuse of:

- end punctuation 0_{79}
- commas 0_{80}
- apostrophes 0_{81}

Capitalization is acceptable [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 82

Handwriting is acceptable [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 83

Effective proofreading evident [ ] yes 1 [ ] no 2 [ ] NA 3 84

Ranking of spelling, etc. [ ] 85

200 Grade 8 essays were marked twice by Grade 8 markers, and 200 Grade 12 essays by Grade 12 markers. In addition, 400 Grade 8 papers (the 200 recycled ones plus 200 additional ones) were distributed among the Grade 12 papers so that they would be evaluated according to Grade 12 standards.

The final day's discussion produced several comments and suggestions. In general, the markers felt that the assessment project and the evaluation exercise were of positive value, worth doing on a regular basis. They thought the topic was sufficiently broad to allow each student an opportunity to express himself, that it allowed for an appraisal of the major strengths and weaknesses of student writing, and that it suggested the expository mode without confining students to it; they also approved of the emphasis on student anonymity. On the other hand, they felt that the topic did lend itself to mediocre student writing, because of the vagueness of "thing" and of the invitation to narration in the word "tell"; there seemed to be little motivation to produce a good paper. The markers agreed with the administering teachers about the time limit not allowing enough opportunity for polishing and editing, and they also thought they could detect teachers' ideas (from the pre-writing discussion) in the final ideas and topics of the essays. Finally, they suggested that a single paragraph might be more appropriate for Grade 8 students who were probably unfamiliar with multi-paragraph writing assignments.

The markers generally approved of the Checklist because of the nine-point scale, the format, and the specific points which force the marker to be cautious and careful. They noted that the Checklist distinguished well between the overall effectiveness of the composition and its contributing parts, and felt that it would make an excellent teaching aid. They added several specific suggestions for modification of the Checklist, including the elimination of the "if-no" lead-in categories in favour of a simple listing of errors to be checked. Other points included categories for identifying technically competent but "thin" papers, for other mechanical errors, and for development of ideas. They recommended that the Department incorporate these changes into a new Checklist. Overall, the marking team believed that the entire Composition Survey would produce a valid and useful description and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of student writing at these levels throughout the province.

Statistical Analysis. The information from the Checklists and from the "General Information" section of the test papers, was analyzed by B.C. Research under the supervision of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Of particular importance were the 200 papers which were re-cycled at each grade level to check marker consistency. The results were somewhat disappointing, especially at the levels of overall evaluation (the nine-point scale) and of the sub-skill categories (recurrent errors and strengths), inasmuch as the two markings of the papers generally failed to agree at a satisfactory extent. While most of the markers were relatively close to one another on the nine-point scale (within one or two numerical points), the actual reliability was too close to the realm of chance occurence for the TAC group to recommend reporting these figures; in the second category, the number of missing items (strengths or errors not checked at all due to the lack of a forced choice), again made the results statistically suspect.

Several reasons were advanced for the apparent inconsistency of the marks on the re-cycled papers. Some of these included unfamiliarity with the Checklist, flaws in the Checklist itself, and even the very comprehensiveness of the Checklist, in addition to the common difficulties of constant marking over a long stretch of time and differences in individual standards. Teachers on the Management Committee and the Survey Team, however, felt that the differences resulted primarily from the essentially subjective nature of marking complete essays; they felt that the amount of agreement was about what could be expected in such an exercise; more familiarity and practice with a modified Checklist, they suggested, might provide technically significant results.

Marker agreement was somewhat higher in the questions which required "yes-no" answers in the five basic areas; the percentage of agreement was, in most cases, about two-thirds or better. It was felt that these results could be reported numerically with some confidence, but the overall ranking scores should be ignored and that the sub-skill categories be treated as only showing trends where large groups of items were checked. Hence the following tables present the percentage of "yes" and "no" responses to the thirteen basic questions in the five major areas. The right-hand column ("pct. agr.") shows the percentage of agreement between the two marks on the re-cycled papers in each grade level.

OVERALL RESULTS

The three tables in this section provide percentages for the thirteen "yes-no" responses in the five general areas of the Checklist. The column "percent agreement" refers to the marker consistency on the sub-sample of papers which were marked twice. For example, in 67% of the recycled papers, markers agreed on whether or not a paper had a developed argument or thesis. Figures for the secondary responses in each area are not given because of the problems outlined in the preceding section; however, trends that seemed important are included in the discussion.

1. Grade 8

Table 2-1 Grade 8 Results[1]

	Yes	No	(Pct. Agr.)
1. Ideas			
Has a developed argument or thesis.	69%	28%	(67%)
2. Organization			
Shows a clear organizational pattern.	47	53	(70)
Appropriate substantiation is evident.	49	49	(63)
Individual paragraphs are well-developed.	30	69	(73)
3. Sentence Usage			
Sentence structure is acceptable.	54	45	(66)
Sentences are clear.	48	50	(64)
Sentence structure is sophisticated.	8	91	(88)
4. Vocabulary			
Vocabulary is acceptable.	75	25	(68)
Vocabulary is sophisticated.	8	91	(91)
5. Mechanics			
Spelling is acceptable.	59	41	(69)
Punctuation is acceptable.	54	44	(67)
Capitalization is acceptable.	75	24	(72)
Handwriting is acceptable.	86	13	(80)

[1] see Appendix for complete statistical summary

Discussion:

Grade 8 students were ranked somewhat higher than might be expected in the areas of argument and organization, given the teachers expecting difficulties with long assignments. Nearly 70% of the papers had a developed argument or thesis, while nearly half of them showed a clear organization pattern with appropriate substantiation. Where these areas received a "no" rating, the main problems were identified as lack of transitions, lack of logical development, and insufficient length. There was also difficulty in the actual formation of clear ideas.

In the areas of vocabulary and mechanics, the students generally scored well. Three-quarters of the papers were judged to have acceptable vocabulary and capitalization, while the spelling was acceptable in almost 60 percent of the cases. The main difficulty noted in the "no" response to vocabulary was a low level of usage; the spelling was rated as unacceptable in more than a third of the papers because of the misspelling of common words.

Paragraphing, sentence usage and punctuation emerged as the weakest basic elements of Grade 8 papers. (Sophistication of sentence structure and vocabulary would not normally be high and has not been considered a basic element of composition here.) Only 30% of the compositions were deemed to have well-developed paragraphs, the remainder having difficulties primarily with poor transitions (almost half of the negative responses) and with lack of logical development. Sentence structure was ranked higher, with slightly more than half of the papers having acceptable sentence structure, and just under half having clear sentences. The main hindrances to clear expression noted were fused or run-on sentences (cited in over half the cases); other problems--sentence fragments, pronoun reference, subject-verb agreement, and inconsistent tense--were checked in less than twenty percent of the papers. The difficulties in punctuation--acceptable in 54% of the papers--also seem related to sentence generation, since about a third of the unacceptable papers were judged to have faulty end punctuation, although comma errors were almost as prevalent.

ii. Grade 12

Table 2-2 Grade 12 Results[1]

	Yes	No.	(Pct. Agr.)
1. Ideas			
Has a developed argument or thesis.	80%	17%	(73%)
2. Organization			
Shows a clear organizational pattern.	65	34	(66)
Appropriate substantiation is evident.	71	26	(70)
Individual paragraphs are well-developed.	54	43	(62)
3. Sentence Usage			
Sentence structure is acceptable.	61	36	(54)
Sentences are clear.	73	25	(69)
Sentence structure is sophisticated	22	76	(64)
4. Vocabulary			
Vocabulary is acceptable.	81	18	(72)
Vocabulary is sophisticated.	21	77	(66)
5. Mechanics			
Spelling is acceptable.	69	30	(76)
Punctuation is acceptable.	61	36	(62)
Capitalization is acceptable.	88	8	(82)
Handwriting is acceptable.	91	7	(80)

[1] see Appendix for complete statistical summary

Discussion:

More than two-thirds of the Grade 12 papers were judged "acceptable" in most of the main categories--the major problems were identified as paragraph development, sentence structure and punctuation. Even in the latter two, however, 61% of the essays achieved an acceptable rating. Especially strong results (at least 80% of the papers rated as acceptable) were seen in the skills of developed argument, vocabulary, capitalization and handwriting.

Eighty percent of the papers were deemed to have a developed argument or thesis. Only 65 percent showed a clear organizational pattern, however, with the main flaws noted as failure to build to an effective conclusion, failure to present ideas in an effective order, and failure to use clear transitions - these problems were cited on about a fifth to a quarter of the papers marked "no". Seventy-one percent of the compositions had appropriate substantiation, while those marked insufficient were deemed inadequate because of being underdeveloped or lacking in specific examples.

With the exception of punctuation, a basic proficiency in mechanics was also generally cited. Vocabulary was acceptable on over four-fifths of the essays, capitalization on 88%, and handwriting on 91%. Vocabulary was remarked as sophisticated in over one-fifth of the papers, primarily because of effective variety of word choice.[1] Spelling was deemed acceptable in 69% of the essays, with, again, the main problem in the poorer papers due to the misspelling of common words. Punctuation was acceptable in 61% of the compositions, and the major problem noted on the Checklist was comma error, almost double that of end punctuation and three times that of apostrophes.

While sentences were regarded as clear in almost three-quarters of the cases, the sentence structure was deemed acceptable in only slightly over 60% of the essays. The major difficulties were still fused sentences (noted twice as often as sentence fragments) with faulty subordination/coordination checked on nearly a quarter of the unacceptable papers. On the other hand, over a fifth of the compositions showed sophisticated sentence usage, mainly because they displayed a variety of sentence patterns.

Paragraph development, however, was the most glaring difficulty, for only 54% of the papers achieved an acceptable rating. The major causes identified on the Checklist were poor transitions and lack of logical development, noted on about a quarter of the unacceptable papers; the poor development of examples was also cited on about a fifth of the essays.

---

[1] Levels of "sophistication" is vocabulary and sentence structure were not expected by the Survey Team or Management Committee to be high. The categories were included to identify papers which exhibited superior abilities in these areas.

iii. Grades 8 and 12 Compared

During the course of the marking session, a random sample of 409 Grade 8 papers were merged with the Grade 12 papers and scored by the Grade 12 markers. Table 2-3 shows the results of this sub-sample (8-SS) as compared with the Grade 12 overall results. (Grade 8 overall results, those determined by Grade 8 markers, are also given in parentheses.) The percentages are those of "yes" responses in the major areas.

Table 2-3 Grade 8 Sub-Sample Results[1]
(Grade 8 Papers Marked on Grade 12 Standards)

	8-SS	12	(8)
1. Ideas			
Has a developed argument or thesis.	62%	80%*	(69%)
2. Organization			
Shows a clear organizational pattern.	43	65*	(47)
Appropriate substantiation is evident.	51	71*	(49)
Individual paragraphs are well-developed.	27	54*	(30)
3. Sentence Usage			
Sentence structure is acceptable.	26	61*	(54)
Sentences are clear.	51	73*	(48)
Sentence structure is sophisticated.	3	22*	(8)
4. Vocabulary			
Vocabulary is acceptable.	42	81*	(75)
Vocabulary is sophisticated	3	21*	(8)
5. Mechanics	43	69*	(59)
Spelling is acceptable.	43	69*	(59)
Punctuation is acceptable.	37	61*	(54)
Capitalization is acceptable.	74	88*	(75)
Handwriting is acceptable.	83	91*	(86)

[1] see Appendix for complete statistical summary

* Grade 12 result significantly different from grade 8 ($p<.05$)

Discussion:

This double marking was devised to indicate both the relative marking standards at the two grade levels and the presence of a developmental learning sequence between the junior and senior secondary programmes. In the two areas of ideas and organization, the Grade 12 markers marked the Grade 8 papers relatively near the overall standards set by the Grade 8 markers; in the other areas (except for clarity of sentences, capitalization and handwriting) the Grade 8 papers were ranked considerably below the levels established by the Grade 8 markers. These results suggest that the Grade 12 teachers do see considerable difference in standards for basic mechanics and usage: sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation.

That the Grade 12 papers were scored higher in all categories--especially in paragraph development, sentence structure, vocabulary and punctuation--does not reflect to the discredit of the Grade 8 papers. Rather, it does suggest what one would expect: there appears to be a sequential learning pattern throughout the secondary school programmes in which student improvement is apparent in all cases, and dramatically so in some, such as in sentence structure and vocabulary.

PERFORMANCE BY STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The "General Information" form on the back of the test booklet (see Appendix) allowed for results to be sub-divided according to sex, age, number of schools attended, time spent watching television, and language background. In the latter category, five groups were identified, as follows:

	Born in Canada	English only Spoken at Home	Other Language than English Preschool
a. Non Canadian, Non English	No	No	Yes
b. Canadian, Non English	Yes	No	Yes
c. 2nd Generation Canadians	Yes	No	No
d. Non Canadian, English	No	Yes	No
e. Canadian, English	Yes	Yes	No

The sub-sample sizes include:

	Grade 8 (%)	Grade 12 (%)
Total B.C.	1,864 (100)	1,819 (100)
Sex		
Male	894 (48)	831 (46)
Female	958 (52)	972 (54)
Age		
Younger (13 or less; 17 or less)	1,429 (79)	1,438 (82)
Older (14 or more; 18 or more)	402 (22)	344 (20)
Number of Schools Attended		
1 or 2	687 (37)	247 (14)
3	462 (25)	487 (27)
4	301 (16)	361 (20)
5 or 6	267 (14)	464 (25)
7 or more	135 (7)	250 (14)
Number of Hours Watching Television on School-Day		
None	54 (3)	76 (4)
1 or less	261 (14)	758 (42)
2	399 (22)	498 (28)
3	473 (25)	298 (17)
4 or more	673 (36)	169 (9)

	Grade 8 (%)		Grade 12 (%)	
Born in Canada				
Yes	1,640	(90)	1,618	(89)
No	192	(10)	191	(11)
Language Other than English Spoken Before Beginning School				
Yes	308	(17)	364	(20)
No	1,520	(83)	1,429	(80)
English Only Language Spoken in Home				
Yes	1,255	(68)	1,270	(70)
No	591	(32)	534	(30)
Can Read Language Other than French or English				
Yes	261	(14)	350	(20)
No	1,544	(86)	1,408	(80)
Language Groups				
a. Non Canadian, Non English	74	(4)	102	(6)
b. Canadian, Non English	172	(10)	210	(12)
c. 2nd Generation Canadian	307	(17)	203	(11)
d. Non Canadian, English	76	(4)	79	(4)
e. Canadian, English	1,091	(60)	1,122	(63)
f. Others	79	(6)	53	(3)

Tables 2-4 and 2-5 provide the percentages of "yes" response to the thirteen basic questions in the five major areas for each of these sub-categories.

Table 2-4 Performance by Student Characteristics - Grade 8

	Male	Female	Younger	Older	Born in Canada	Not Born in Canada
Ideas						
Has a developed argument or thesis	65%	73% *	71% *	61%	69%	73%
Organization						
Shows a clear organizational pattern	43	50 *	50 *	35	47	48
Appropriate substantiation is evident	45	53 *	52 *	41	50	45
Individual paragraphs are well-developed	25	35 *	34 *	19	31	29
Sentence Usage						
Sentence structure is acceptable	48	60 *	59 *	40	55	53
Sentences are clear	44	52 *	53 *	34	49 *	41
Sentence structure is sophisticated	6	10 *	9 *	4	8	9
Vocabulary						
Vocabulary is acceptable	68	82 *	79 *	64	76	72
Vocabulary is sophisticated	6	10 *	10 *	4	8	10
Mechanics						
Spelling is acceptable	49	69 *	63 *	48	59	61
Punctuation is acceptable	47	60 *	58 *	42	54	51
Capitalization is acceptable	67	82 *	78 *	65	75	76
Handwriting is acceptable	78	95 *	88 *	82	86	88

* Indicates that difference is statistically significant. ($p<.05$)

Table 2-4, Cont'd....

	No. of Schools Attended					No. Hours Watching TV					
	1-2	3	4	5-6	7+	0	0-1	2	3	4+	
Ideas											
Has a developed argument or thesis	71	66	68	70	69	70	70	67	70	68	
Organization											
Shows a clear organizational pattern	51	42	47	46	44	46	52	49	48	43	
Appropriate substantiation is evident	51	47	50	51	42	46	51	55	48	47	
Individual paragraphs are well-developed	31	28	34	30	22	22	38	32	34	25	
Sentence Usage											
Sentence structure is acceptable	57	54	56	50	49	56	59	57	57	49	
Sentences are clear	50	48	49	46	43	52	56	47	51	44	*
Sentence structure is sophisticated	8	8	9	6	9	9	12	11	7	5	*
Vocabulary											
Vocabulary is acceptable	76	75	76	74	70	80	83	75	77	71	*
Vocabulary is sophisticated	7	8	11	8	7	11	13	12	7	5	*
Mechanics											
Spelling is acceptable	60	61	56	58	58	56	68	59	62	55	*
Punctuation is acceptable	56	53	54	52	48	50	59	57	54	51	
Capitalization is acceptable	79	74	74	72	65	* 63	82	80	77	68	
Handwriting is acceptable	87	87	83	89	83	89	89	85	88	85	

Table 2-4, Con'd....

	Home Language		Languages Read		Language Groupings				
	Engl	Other	Engl/Fr	Other	a	b	c	d	e
Ideas									
Has a developed argument or thesis	68	70	68	73	78	70	69	68	68
Organization									
Shows a clear organizational pattern	46	48	46	52	54	47	47	38	46
Appropriate substantiation is evident	50	48	49	53	46	50	49	51	49
Individual paragraphs are well-developed	31	28	30	31	28	29	27	30	32
Sentence Usage									
Sentence structure is acceptable	54	56	54	56	58	47	47	51	54
Sentences are clear	49	48	48	46	45	50	47	40	50
Sentence structure is sophisticated	9	6	8	9	11	8	5	9	9
Vocabulary									
Vocabulary is acceptable	75	76	75	75	80	76	75	71	76
Vocabulary is sophisticated	8	8	8	9	15	6	7	7	9
Mechanics									
Spelling is acceptable	58	62	59	60	69	62	61	47	49
Punctuation is acceptable	54	54	55	49	49	53	57	54	55
Capitalization is acceptable	75	75	75	74	73	76	76	78	75
Handwriting is acceptable	86	87	85	92 *	89	89	85	90	86

Table 2-5 Performance by Student Characteristics - Grade 12

	Male	Female	Younger	Older	Born in Canada	Not Born in Canada
Ideas						
Has a developed argument or thesis	79%	80%	81%	74% *	80%	79%
Organization						
Shows a clear organizational pattern	62	67 *	68	53 *	65	68
Appropriate substantiation is evident	71	71	73	62 *	71	71
Individual paragraphs are well-developed	50	58 *	57	44 *	55	52
Sentence Usage						
Sentence structure is acceptable	54	67 *	64	48 *	61	60
Sentences are clear	68	77 *	76	60 *	73	67 *
Sentence structure is sophisticated	19	24 *	24	15 *	22	22
Vocabulary						
Vocabulary is acceptable	76	85 *	83	72 *	81	79
Vocabulary is sophisticated	20	22	22	15 *	21	21
Mechanics						
Spelling is acceptable	58	78 *	73	54 *	69	67
Punctuation is acceptable	55	67 *	64	49 *	61	60
Capitalization is acceptable	84	91 *	89	83 *	88	93 *
Handwriting is acceptable	85	95 *	92	84 *	91	91

* Indicates that difference is statistically significant. ($p<.05$)

Table 2-5, Cont'd....

	No. of Schools Attended					No. Hours Watching TV				
	1-2	3	4	5-6	7+	0	0-1	2	3	4+
Ideas										
Has a developed argument or thesis	84	79	79	79	78	75	81	79	80	79
Organization										
Shows a clear organizational pattern	70	65	60	68	63	67	68	63	63	56
Appropriate substantiation is evident	74	69	67	75	72	71	72	71	70	65
Individual paragraphs are well-developed	58	53	50	57	55	59	57	50	57	47
Sentence Usage										
Sentence structure is acceptable	68	59	57	63	61	68	66	59	57	44
Sentences are clear	70	70	70	75	70	82	77	70	68	62
Sentence structure is sophisticated	27	22	20	23	18	26	25	20	21	11
Vocabulary										
Vocabulary is acceptable	79	80	84	80	84	87	83	80	77	78
Vocabulary is sophisticated	24	20	22	20	20	33	25	19	18	10 *
Mechanics										
Spelling is acceptable	68	70	69	70	66	75	72	67	66	64
Punctuation is acceptable	65	61	58	63	59	63	65	59	58	57
Capitalization is acceptable	90	86	88	90	85	84	89	86	89	86
Handwriting is acceptable	94	90	92	90	90	90	92	90	90	90

Table 2-5, Cont'd....

	Home Language		Languages Read		Language Groups				
	Engl	Other	Engl/Fr	Other	a	b	c	d	e
Ideas									
Has a developed argument or thesis	80	78	80	77	74	81	78	86	80
Organization									
Shows a clear organizational pattern	66	62	66	62	62	63	64	75	65
Appropriate substantiation is evident	72	67	71	69	64	69	68	81	72
Individual paragraphs are well-developed	52	55	55	53	47	57	49	57	56
Sentence Usage									
Sentence structure is acceptable	62	59	60	63	55	49	60	65	62
Sentences are clear	74	69 *	73	70	62	74	68	73	74
Sentence structure is sophisticated	22	21	22	22	20	25	18	25	22
Vocabulary									
Vocabulary is acceptable	82	78	81	80	74	81	78	86	83
Vocabulary is sophisticated	21	19	21	22	16	22	17	28	21
Mechanics									
Spelling is acceptable	69	69	69	69	66	69	71	68	71
Punctuation is acceptable	62	60	61	61	59	60	61	60	62
Capitalization is acceptable	87	90	88	89	93	90	89	92	87
Handwriting is acceptable	91	90	91	89	89	91	89	92	91

Discussion:

i. Sex. At the Grade 8 level, females scored significantly higher than males in all 13 areas; the difference in "yes" scores between the two groups was usually about 10%. At the Grade 12 level, females were rated significantly higher in all but three areas: developed argument, appropriate substantiation and sophisticated vocabulary.

ii. Age. At both grade levels the younger group of students, which included the norm (8-13 as against 14-16 for Grade 8; 14-17 as against 18 and above at Grade 12), clearly outperformed the older group of students in every area.

iii. Time Spent Watching Television. At the Grade 8 level there seemed to be some indication that there may be a connection between television viewing and achievement in writing. Those students who reported watching an hour or less of television on a school night scored higher than those students who watch 4 hours or more per night in five areas: clear sentences, sophisticated language structure, acceptable vocabulary and acceptable spelling. The results on the other objectives, except for developed argument and handwriting, followed the same pattern, although the differences were not statistically significant. In any event, there are apparently some differences between a minimum amount of television viewing (one hour or less) and an extreme amount (four hours or more). Perhaps it should be noted that 36% of Grade 8 students did indicate that they watched four hours or more per night - the largest response in any of the six categories.

In Grade 12, the results followed the same general pattern, except in the areas of developed argument, capitalization and handwriting. In general, those students who indicated that they spent an hour or less watching television displayed better writing skills than those who watched for four or more hours, although in this case the latter group represented only nine percent of the sample. For the record, the viewing time at the senior grade was reported as considerably less than at the Grade 8 level, with 25% indicating one hour of viewing and 28% about two hours, compared to the 61% of Grade 8 students listing three or more hours per day.

iv. Other Findings. The remainder of the reporting categories produced only very scattered significant differences. For example, Grade 8 students who had attended fewer schools were more frequently judged to have acceptable capitalization skills than those who had attended seven or more schools. Likewise, students born in Canada had clearer sentences than those born elsewhere (at both grade levels), although there were no other significant differences; this case might be explained by the fact that sentence clarity is perhaps one of the easiest ways by which a student who uses English as a second language can be identified. In any event, these results and those outlined in the next two paragraphs should not be taken as meaningful in any way.

With the exceptions noted above, there were no significant differences according to the number of schools attended or to the place of birth being in Canada. Those Grade 8 students from solely Anglophone homes displayed no difference from those who came from homes where another language was spoken; in Grade 12, students coming from homes where only English is spoken scored better in appropriate substantiation and clear sentences. There were no differences between those students who read a language other than French or English, except in the case of handwriting at the Grade 8 level.

Perhaps more surprising was the lack of differences found among the five language groups identified. That there were no differences in any composition areas between these groups seems unlikely. In two of the groups (a. and d.) the sample sizes were so small as to make meaningful results impossible to obtain. Further study of this issue may be warranted, but these results should not be regarded as being meaningful in either a positive or negative sense--that is, that differences did not show up here does not necessarily mean that there are no differences.

TEACHER METHODS, MATERIALS AND BACKGROUNDS

Obviously, so many variables influence student writing that it is impossible to assign specific causes to any deficiencies (or to any strengths) in composition. As the previous section suggests, the student's age and sex may account for much of his skill; possibly even the amount of time spent watching television, or the kinds of television he watches, may have some impact. Precisely what, however, is hard to tell. If it is impossible to determine the exact effects of a student's writing from his own background, it is equally difficult to pinpoint specific causes in the teaching of that student. Nevertheless, some inferences may be drawn about the teaching of composition on B.C., inferences that could possibly suggest changes to make present methods more effective or efficient.

Part I of this Report, dealing with goals as seen by the teachers, suggests that they believe their chief aim in teaching composition is to encourage students to write clearly and precisely (Table 7-2). Formal grammar instruction is not considered terribly important, as long as clarity of expression is achieved. Also ranking among the most important goals are logical development (slightly less important to Grade 8), vocabulary, and the ability to write grammatically and to spell correctly; other mechanical aspects of writing, such as handwriting, were regarded as of less importance. The overall results noted above suggest that abilities such as capitalization, handwriting, and vocabulary are being learned (or have been fairly well established by Grade 8). Problems of sentence clarity do exist at the Grade 8 level, however, for half the papers were rated as unacceptable; by Grade 12 however, almost three-quarters of the papers were rated acceptable in terms of clear sentences. By this level, the major difficulty had become paragraph development, a more complex level of coherence.

"Methods and Materials", Part II of the Report, raises quite specific issues. Table 7-6, for example, shows that large numbers of teachers at all three grade levels (43.1%, 41.7% and 44.9%, respectively) spend less than twenty percent of their allotted English time on <u>instruction</u> in composition (compared to about the same percentages of teachers who spend 40-59% of their time on literature); it would appear that the common integration of the writing programme with literary study has perhaps worked to the detriment of instruction in the former. (Although almost half the teachers indicate that they spend

20-39% of the time in writing practice, it may be that the students are not clear about what they are practicing.)

The two major conclusions of Part II of the Report, however, are even more crucial for the writing programme. Table 7-1, concerning the backgrounds of secondary school teachers, shows that relatively large percentages have apparently insufficient training. Less than three-quarters, for instance (65.1% at Grade 8, 72% at Grade 11, 72.6% at Grade 12), indicated that they had training in English composition; less than one-third had any background in linguistics (26.4%, 32.3%, 32.1%). Moreover, Grade 8 teachers on the whole had less experience and training, coupled with larger classes and greater total pupil loads, than their senior secondary counterparts; they were also less likely to be full-time teachers of English. In later sections of the Questionnaire the teachers at all levels recognized these difficulties when they gave high priorities to the reduction of class size and total pupil load (Table 7-19), and when they indicated that their pre-service training had been insufficient and that more time should be made available for personalized instruction and conferences (Table 7-23).

Secondly, in the sections dealing with materials, large numbers of teachers (46.3%, 62.8%, 65.3%, respectively) indicated that they "always" or "often" made substitutions for the prescribed language and literature texts (Table 7-14). Moreover, the three tables that provided teachers' opinions on the texts (Tables 7-15, 7-16, and 7-17) showed consistent low ratings for or non-use of the available language texts. The need and desire for good language or composition texts at all three grade levels was clearly indicated.

The LANGUAGE: B.C. Questionnaire also contained a section dealing with specific methods of teaching composition. Table 2-6, below, summarizes the responses: A and B are percentage figures of the response in each category, and C is the mean response to each of the listed techniques according to the following five point scale: 1 - Always; 2 - Often; 3 - Sometimes; 4 - Rarely; 5 - Never. The techniques in C are ranked in approximate decreasing order of frequency of use.

Table 2-6 Methods of Teaching Composition

		Grade: 8	11	12
A.	How many compositions in the course of the year are assigned, marked and returned to the student?			
	1. 0-10	11.9%	15.7%	17.9%
	2. 10-19	34.7	42.9	48.2
	3. 20-29	26.8	26.6	20.4
	4. 30-39	13.1	7.4	6.6
	5. 40 or more	10.1	4.6	4.4
B.	What is the average length of such assignments?			
	1. One-half page	9.4	2.0	.7
	2. One page	37.9	9.4	7.7
	3. One to two pages	39.9	50.3	40.1
	4. Two or more pages	10.2	35.7	47.8
C.	In teaching composition, indicate the relative frequency with which you use the following techniques:			
	1. Encourage students to get ideas and assistance from you, other students, parents, during draft stages.	2.0	1.9	1.9
	2. Utilize subject matter arising from readings.	2.2	2.0	2.0
	3. Conduct instructional sessions following the writing to correct deficiencies.	2.5	2.4	2.3
	4. Teacher provides titles or subjects for papers.	2.5	2.4	2.4
	5. Conduct prewriting discussion of content, vocabulary, style, and form.	2.5	2.5	2.4
	6. Utilize subject matter arising from discussions.	2.5	2.5	2.5
	7. Utilize general topics of interest.	2.5	2.7	2.6
	8. Give formal lessons on writing.	2.9	2.8	2.7
	9. Give explanations of formal grammar principles.	2.8	2.9	2.8
	10. Require a written plan to be prepared before first draft.	2.9	2.9	2.8
	11. Require correction and revision of final marked drafts.	2.8	2.8	3.0
	12. Class provides titles or subjects for papers.	2.9	3.1	2.9
	13. Correct rough draft(s).	2.8	3.1	3.1
	14. Employ grammar exercises.	2.9	3.2	3.2

Discussion:

Sixty to sixty-nine per cent of the teachers at all grade levels assign between ten and thirty compositions during the course of a year, probably about one every two or three weeks. The papers are at least one to two pages or more in the great majority of cases at the senior levels, while Grade 8 teachers tend to give more assignments of a shorter length. About one-sixth of the students in the senior grades, however, appear to write less than one composition per month.

The responses concerning frequency of methods follow consistently from the goals and nature of the programmes outlined in Parts I and II of this report in that composition is generally integrated with other elements of the English programme and that formal grammar instruction is not an important and constant concern. Nearly all the mean scores were between the "often" and "sometimes" category, (a similar pattern to the responses in other areas of this section - see Part II),with most clustering toward the latter. The derivation of ideas from various sources and the use of subject matter for compositions arising from reading materials were the most often used techniques. Variation in the methods of providing subjects and pre-writing and post-writing discussions fell mid-way between the two main response categories. More formal emphasis on grammar and composition--special classes, drafts, exercises--were less often used. There seemed to be little distinction between methods used at the three grade levels, with the exception that Grade 8 teachers made marginally more use of grammar exercises and revision of drafts.

This section elicited more "other" responses from teachers than any other section of the questionnaire. Many respondents noted additional sources for composition subjects: personal experience; films, photographs and television; records and tapes; journals. Several other methods for dealing with composition improvement were also suggested, including peer evaluation, self-correction, rewriting, proofreading, and comparison with samples of good writing.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall Results. "How well do secondary school students write?" This survey does not answer that question directly for several reasons. Most importantly, since the judgement of composition is among the most subjective of all evaluative procedures, it rarely if ever results in a clear set of qualitative figures. Secondly, variations in standards may occur among various groups of evaluators; for example, what may be acceptable Grade 8 spelling to a group of Grade 8 teachers may look quite different to groups of parents, trustees, business people, or even the students themselves. Yet imposing objective and unvarying criteria (such as, say, deciding that five spelling errors, regardless of word difficulty, constitutes an unacceptable performance) would create an artificial and arbitrary standard that would probably please no one while at the same time would be of little use for diagnostic purposes. Finally, the standards of writing may vary from locale to locale, depending on the skills, backgrounds and desires of the students involved and on particular classroom situations. Hence a simplified qualitative judgement (that is a single letter or numerical grade) on the composition ability of Grade 8 and 12 students would probably be of little use; perhaps in some ways, it is a blessing that the results of the markers' overall rankings in each check-list area proved to be statistically unreliable (see Appendix).

This assessment, however, does begin to answer a somewhat simpler, but more important question: not how well do B.C. secondary students write, but simply how do they write. Even here, though, the results may be interpreted differently by many groups. To return to the spelling example, is it a matter for rejoicing that over two-thirds of Grade 12 students demonstrate a level of spelling ability acceptable to their teachers, or is it a matter for concern that thirty per cent of the students were found to be at an unacceptable level of spelling ability? Again, the amount of emphasis to be placed on various areas should be determined by a range of people which include parents, teachers, trustees among others. The comments and suggestions which follow may help such discussions begin.

A good diagnostic test should reveal patterns of strength and weakness, and this assessment does provide information that should be valuable for teachers and others in determining curricular goals and methods. The results of the survey suggest that student writing is neither as black as has been pictured nor, on the other hand, as competent as might be hoped. Student writing on the whole, may be said to be generally acceptable to teachers at the grade level for which it was produced. The fact that over two-thirds of the papers at both grade levels were deemed to have a developed argument or thesis seems remarkable, although the nature of the topic may have contributed to that high ranking, since it set up a thesis by asking for a discussion of something interesting or exciting. (That the area of clear organizational pattern was rated lower than developed argument also raises questions about the high incidence of a developed thesis.) The students in both grades demonstrated acceptable vocabulary (in 75-90% of the papers), as well as acceptable capitalization and handwriting (in 75-90% of the papers); these achievements suggest that students have received a good grounding in these basic areas in the elementary grades, and further that vocabulary continues to develop throughout the secondary school years.

The Grade 8 results seem especially promising in that so many of the students (about half) were able to deal with an expository topic by maintaining a developed argument, showing clear organization, and providing appropriate examples. Since Grade 8 students might not be expected to exhibit such skills, normally associated with longer papers, the results appear encouraging. For this area - the relatively low score on developed (expository) paragraphs could be considered as of little importance at this level. What the other scores seem to show is that instruction should focus on sentences, both in clarity and structure, with special attention being paid to fused sentences, subordination/coordination, and end punctuation. Expressing ideas in clear sentences could be the prime objective of composition at the Grade 8 level. Attention to spelling improvement might also be stressed in the curriculum - especially since such a weakness is perhaps the most obvious error to most readers.

Grade 12 papers show the same kinds of strengths - vocabulary, capitalization, handwriting - along with general improvement (even allowing for higher standards) in most of the other areas. Lack of clarity and coherence is still the most evident error, but here too the problem occurs at the advanced stage of the paragraph and the entire essay. Although sentence structure has apparently improved, problems with fused sentences and subordination/coordination remain; punctuation errors, however, have become mainly internal as sentences have become more complex. Paragraph development is the lowest of the major skill areas, however, with only slightly more than half the papers being judged acceptable. The major problems identified again have to do with clarity and coherence: transitions and logical development. Work on spelling could also be continued, for the reason mentioned above.

The marking of several papers from Grade 8 according to Grade 12 standards provides a useful constant - one recommended by several members of the technical advisory and survey teams - and should be a part of any future assessment. The procedure does indicate that clearly different standards are imposed at the various levels, and it seems to imply that students continue to meet and even improve upon these standards throughout their secondary school years. That over one half of the sub-sample of Grade 8 papers met Grade 12 standards of acceptability in the areas of developed argument, substantiation and sentence clarity may suggest that students throughout the middle years may well be able to handle more sophisticated and more intensive work in composition than they may be getting. This method of marking probably confirms as well that handwriting and capitalization skills need not be stressed in the secondary grades.

Performance by Student Characteristics. Here the results appear rather inconclusive at best. The superior performances of females over males and younger over older students - results which follow traditional patterns - have little significance for curriculum development or classroom procedures. The results in the categories of television viewing and language background perhaps indicate further specific research to be carried out in these areas. The latter requires greater sample sizes, for instance, in order to provide significant information. In the former, although it might seem that students who watch a minimum amount of television write better than those who watch large amounts, there are too many variables to determine a clear cause and effect relationship: do good writers perhaps just watch less television as a matter of course? what, in fact, do they watch? indeeed, are the students' own accounts of their watching time even reliable? If these indications, however, are accurate - that 61% of Grade 8 students watch three or more hours of television daily (at least three times the amount of time they spend in English classes) - then teachers and curriculum planners might explore ways in which to make use of these experiences in the course of language instruction.

Methodology. Composition experts agree that in order to learn to write the student must write regularly; most also contend that the writing should be commented upon in detail. While teachers at both grade levels seem to assign a number of compositions, more than half the students write only one piece every two or three weeks. Yet weekly assignments, even at the Grade 12 level where emphasis could be placed upon fully-developed paragraphs, might provide sufficient practice time. However, if teachers are to increase the amount of writing practice given their students, they must also (considering the number of students they meet) be given sufficient time to mark those assignments. Certainly, too, more time should be devoted to pre-writing and post-writing discussions of student writing--these two techniques rated between "often" and "sometimes" on the five-point scale, but any writing assignment, if it is to be meaningful to the student, must include both considerable preparation and subsequent discussion of general strengths and weaknesses. Such methods might be expected to rank much higher in frequency. In addition, writing might be more often treated as a skill complete in itself with formal lessons devoted to the processes and results of composition, instead of considering it as a mere adjunct to

reading and/or literary analysis. Given the overall perfomances on the writing, formal grammatical instruction (in the manner of "presciptive" grammar lessons and exercises) hardly seems warranted, although some grammatical or rhetorical attention should probably be paid to elements of sentence structure and puctuation at all grade levels. Otherwise, the variety of methods used, the fact that most of those listed are used "sometimes", and the number of additional techniques suggested all indicate that secondary teachers show considerable concern for the teaching of clear and effective writing.

Marking Checklist. The Marking Checklist, developed by the Survey Team and the Management Committee, has generally received praise from teachers who have had the opportunity to use it. Obviously, though, the instrument needs further development. Still to be resolved is the question of whether its failure to provide the statistically reliable data resulted from flaws in the Checklist, lack of training in its use, or the subjective nature of marking essays in general. Nevertheless, the Checklist was used by 35 markers to grade about 4500 essays in 3½ days with only a few hours of training, and this exercise provided data which may prove diagnostically very useful. Certainly further refinement of the Checklist and of various methods of mass grading seem justifiable, so that even more detailed and consistent data might be obtained for the purposes of curriculum development.

Too, many teachers at various levels of secondary and university work who received copies of the Checklist considered it valuable not just as a means of collecting information from a large sample but also for providing individual students with a comprehensive specific guide to their own writing skills which could then be measured at different times in their careers. Given wide circulation among teachers, the Checklist could itself become a useful tool in the teaching of composition and in the training of teachers, as well as for diagnostic purposes.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following specific recommendations, which derive from the preceding discussion, fall into four major categories: curriculum, methods, assessment and research.

Curriculum

1) Programmes should be designed to encourage more regular written work by students, perhaps as much as at least one assignment per week although these may often involve just single paragraphs even at the Grade 12 level. HOWEVER, time must also be allowed for teachers at all levels to mark such assignments thoroughly and effectively.

2) Current curricula should focus on specific weaknesses at each grade level: sentence clarity and development, and punctuation at Grade 8, sentence structure and paragraph development at Grade 12. As indicated in Part II of the report, as well, composition texts that would enable teachers to work especially with sentence and idea generation should be found.

Methodology

3) Teachers should be encouraged to devote time to writing and rhetoric as a unique subject of instruction not just as an adjunct to the study of literature or reading.

4) Pre-writing discussions dealing with requirements of and approaches to a composition assignment - and post-writing instructional sessions should be seen as indispensible parts of the writing process.

5) Given television viewing habits, especially at the Grade 8 level, teachers might explore various techniques of using this massive television experience in the English programme (e.g., writing reviews of shows, character analyses, new or different endings, clear synopses

for non-viewers; exploring dramatic techniques; expanding vocabulary; developing critical awareness.)

Checklist

6) The Department of Education should continue to refine the Checklist not only as an instrument for mass marking but as a tool which might be made available to all teachers for assessing a student's individual progress.

7) The Department should also explore alternative types of tests and marking techniques--involving trained markers familiar with the Checklist, various kinds of markers, constant (single) standards, multiple markings of a single essay - in order to develop a clear and effective method of diagnostic analysis across the province and even within districts.

Research and Development

8) Further research might be undertaken into the effect of television viewing habits and language background on composition.

9) Local Boards and Faculties of Education and Departments of English in post-secondary institutions should ensure that all teachers and teacher's aides have sufficient pre-service and in-service training in composition. Perhaps writing workshops, linguistic services, and rhetoric refresher sessions could be made not only part of on-campus offerings but could be provided in district areas as well.

10) Finally, a diagnostic assessment of student writing should be carried out on a regular basis, perhaps every four years. Certainly it would be useful to survey the present Grade 8 students when they reach Grade 12. Not only would such assessments identify changing strengths and weaknesses in the writing, but the gradual build-up of information would provide the public with reliable information on the state of teaching and learning of composition instead of the present varying methods of evaluation and subjective judgement on the part of many different people which foster suspicions and unpleasant feelings on all sides.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I-A

Reading Test Results:

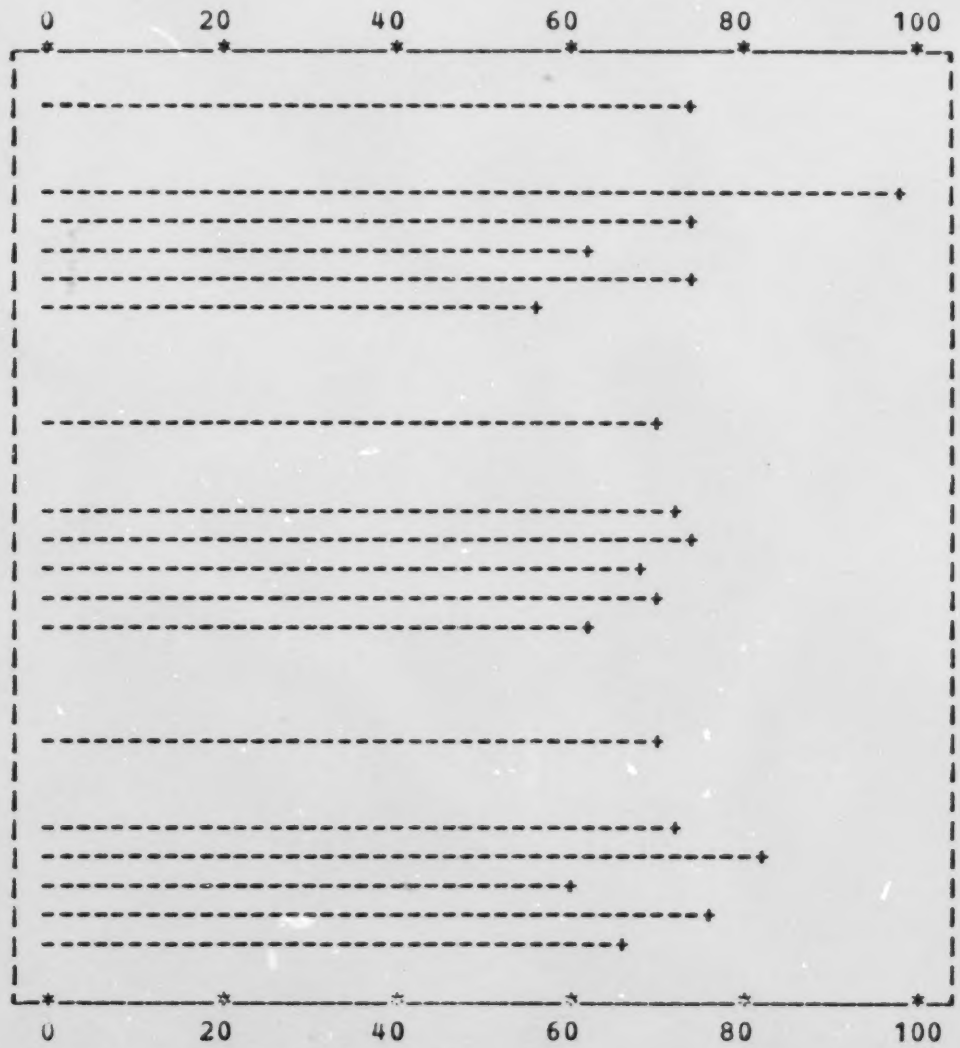
By Domain, Objective and by Item

1976 GRADE/YEAR 4 B.C. READING ASSESSMENT
A PILOT STUDY

Number of students tested = 34626

PROVINCE-WIDE
Results by Domain and Objective

	AVERAGE SCORE (% correct)
DOMAIN 1. - WORD IDENTIFICATION	73.0
OBJECTIVE:	
1.1. Visual Memory	98.5
1.2. Phonics	74.6
1.3. Structural Analysis	61.0
1.4. Context	74.1
1.5. Dictionary	56.9
DOMAIN 2. - COMPREHENSION OF PROSE MATERIALS	69.0
OBJECTIVE:	
2.1. Main Idea	72.8
2.2. Important Details	73.9
2.3. Sequence	67.1
2.4. Logical Reasoning	70.2
2.5. Purpose	61.2
DOMAIN 3. - COMPREHENSION OF FUNCTIONAL MATERIALS	70.8
OBJECTIVE:	
3.1. Locate Information	71.5
3.2. Signs	81.5
3.3. Road Maps	59.8
3.4. Product Label	75.9
3.5. Arithmetic Stories	65.5



RESULTS FOR EACH TEST ITEM[1]

DOMAIN 1. WORD IDENTIFICATION

OBJECTIVE 1.1.	The student should be able to use visual memory to recognize high frequency words.

(Note: words were randomly selected from Johnson's "Basic Vocabulary" list and all students responded to the 12 items shown below. Teachers said each word aloud and then used it in the sentence given.
These item appear on page 1 of the student test booklet.)

			P. Value	Stand. Error
1.	The dog howled because it was hungry.			
	A	because	A 99.2	0.0
	B	been	B 0.2	0.0
	C	before	C 0.1	0.0
	D	behind	D 0.2	0.0
	E	believe	E 0.1	0.0
		omit	0.2	0.0
2.	We had already finished the game when they arrived.			
	A	all	A 2.4	0.0
	B	almost	B 0.3	0.0
	C	alone	C 0.1	0.0
	D	already	D 96.8	0.0
	E	always	E 0.1	0.0
		omit	0.2	0.0
3.	I was thrown from my horse as it jumped the fence.			
	A	home	A 0.1	0.0
	B	house	B 2.1	0.0
	C	how	C 0.1	0.0
	D	horse	D 97.4	0.0
	E	his	E 0.1	0.0

([1] Note: The results shown here are the percentages of students answering each item correctly.)

(These items appear on page 1 of the student test booklet.)

			P. Value	Stand. Error
4.	Have you ever gone to the Williams Lake Stampede?			
	A	gone	A 99.1	0.0
	B	going	B 0.3	0.0
	C	get	C 0.1	0.0
	D	got	D 0.2	0.0
	E	gave	E 0.1	0.0
		omit	0.2	0.0
5.	I like to eat corn on the cob.			
	A	left	A 0.1	0.0
	B	let	B 0.1	0.0
	C	light	C 0.5	0.0
	D	like	D 98.9	0.0
	E	little	E 0.1	0.0
		omit	0.2	0.0
6.	"Please come into my office", said the doctor.			
	A	said	A 99.2	0.0
	B	says	B 0.3	0.0
	C	see	C 0.1	0.0
	D	she	D 0.1	0.0
	E	say	E 0.2	0.0
		omit	0.2	0.0
7.	The fishing boats went out at dawn.			
	A	want	A 1.0	0.0
	B	went	B 98.4	0.0
	C	were	C 0.2	0.0
	D	wear	D 0.1	0.0
	E	with	E 0.1	0.0
		omit	0.2	0.0
8.	Are you sure that this is the right road?			
	A	some	A 0.0	0.0
	B	same	B 0.1	0.0
	C	soon	C 0.1	0.0
	D	should	D 0.9	0.0
	E	sure	E 98.6	0.0
		omit	0.2	0.0

(These items appear on page 1 of the student test booklet.)

		P. Value	Stand. Error
9. We had to use a nylon rope to climb the cliff.			
A	us	A 1.5	0.0
B	use	B 95.8	0.0
C	used	C 2.3	0.0
D	until	D 0.1	0.0
E	under	E 0.1	0.0
	omit	0.2	0.0
10. Who was the first person to fly across the Pacific Ocean?			
A	what	A 0.1	0.0
B	when	B 0.1	0.0
C	where	C 0.1	0.0
D	which	D 0.2	0.0
E	who	E 99.4	0.0
	omit	0.2	0.0
11. The detectives found nothing in the locked room.			
A	nothing	A 99.3	0.0
B	number	B 0.1	0.0
C	night	C 0.1	0.0
D	never	D 0.3	0.0
E	next	E 0.1	0.0
	omit	0.2	0.0
12. Parksville is a town on Vancouver Island.			
A	take	A 0.1	0.0
B	table	B 0.1	0.0
C	took	C 0.1	0.0
D	town	D 99.3	0.0
E	tune	E 0.2	0.0
	omit	0.2	0.0

The following stories were used for Objectives 1.2. through 3.1.:

STORY 1 - Test Booklet Page 2

One day Amy the Ant took her lunch to the park. She sat under a tree and started to eat. Then some boys and girls came over. Amy gave them some food. It was a fine day for a picnic.

STORY 2 - Test Booklet Page 4

John and Sam were hunters. They woke up one morning to find rabbits in their traps. John said that he would use his rabbit to feed his family. Sam said, "John, you are foolish. If you let your rabbit go, he will lead you to a rabbit hole. Then you can shoot several and have a lot of meat." John didn't like the idea. He told Sam to carry out the plan by himself. John cooked his rabbit. Sam followed his rabbit into the woods. Later in the day, Sam returned. He had no rabbit at all and no food to feed his family that night.

STORY 3 - Test Booklet Page 6

Mr. Popper was a house painter, but what he really wanted to do was travel to the South Pole. When he wrote to Admiral Drake at the South Pole, telling him how funny he thought penguins were, he never expected to get an answer. But Admiral Drake did answer. He sent Mr. Popper a live penguin!

Can you imagine having a live penguin for a pet? Mr. Popper named his penguin Captain Cook and made him a home in the refrigerator.

It was not long, however, before Captain Cook became so lonely that he would not eat. The keeper of a large aquarium sent Mr. Popper another penguin, named Greta, who was lonely too. To take care of the penguins, Mr. Popper had a refrigeration plant installed in the cellar. Before long Greta and Captain Cook had ten baby penguins.

Although the Poppers became very fond of the penguins, the birds caused many problems. The problems they caused make a very funny story.

STORY 4 - Test Booklet Page 8

Helen Keller was born in 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama. When she was two years old, she lost her sight and hearing as the result of an illness. In 1886 she became the pupil of Anne Sullivan, who taught Helen to "see" with her fingertips, to "hear" with her feet and hands, and to communicate with other people. Miss Sullivan succeeded in arousing Helen's curiosity and interest by spelling the names of objects into her hand. At the end of three years Helen had mastered both the manual and the braille alphabets and could read and write. She began speech lessons in 1890 with Sarah Fuller. Helen entered Radcliffe College in 1900 and was elected vice-president of her freshman class. After graduation, Helen began to study the problems of the blind. She toured the United States, Europe and Asia, giving lectures on behalf of the handicapped. She also wrote many books and articles, including an autobiography of her early years.

OBJECTIVE 1.2.	The student should be able to use common phonetic skills through a knowledge of such elements as rhyming words and sound-symbol relationships.

GO rhymes with SNOW. Find the word that rhymes with TREE.
(item 5 on page 3 in test booklet A - story 1)

			P. Value	Stand. Error
A	treat	A	8.4	0.15
B	seem	B	2.5	0.08
C	leap	C	1.4	0.06
D	pea	D	83.0	0.20
E	I don't know.	E	4.2	0.11
	omit		0.3	0.0

Which of these words has a long vowel sound?
(item 11 on page 5 in test booklet A - story 2)

A	let	A	3.4	0.10
B	woke	B	74.8	0.23
C	rabbit	C	9.9	0.16
D	hunters	D	7.5	0.14
E	I don't know.	E	3.4	0.10
	omit		0.6	0.0

The story says "...he will lead you to a rabbit hole." Which word rhymes with LEAD as it is used here?
(item 11 on page 5 in test booklet B - story 2)

A	red	A	2.8	0.09
B	dead	B	22.4	0.22
C	feed	C	68.2	0.25
D	friend	D	2.2	0.08
E	I don't know.	E	3.7	0.10
	omit		0.4	0.0

(* Note: Each item from Objective 1.2. to the end was answered by half of the students. If an asterisk appears, the district results are significantly different from the rest of the province at $p<.05$; otherwise the results are not significantly different from a statistical point of view.)

			P. Value	Stand. Error
Which one of these words has a silent letter? (item 16 on page 7 in test booklet B - story 3)				
A	fond	A	4.2	0.11
B	plant	B	2.3	0.08
C	never	C	3.9	0.10
D	answer	D	84.5	0.19
E	I don't know.	E	2.7	0.09
	omit		1.5	0.0
In which word does the "c" sound the same as it does in CENT? (item 23 on page 9 in test booklet B - story 4)				
A	speech	A	14.0	0.19
B	elected	B	4.2	0.11
C	curiosity	C	14.1	0.19
D	vice-president	D	58.1	0.27
E	I don't know.	E	6.8	0.14
	omit		2.6	0.0

OBJECTIVE 1.3.	The student should be able to identify such aides to structural analysis as prefixes, sufrixes and root words.

		P. Value	Stand. Error
The words HELPFUL and WORKABLE have suffixes. Which word below has a suffix? (item 17 on page 7 in test booklet A - story 3)			
A	match	A 4.9	0.12
B	lonely	B 50.4	0.27
C	repeat	C 18.8	0.21
D	problem	D 9.4	0.16
E	I don't know.	E 14.7	0.19
	omit	1.3	0.0
BLACKBIRD and STRAWBERRY are compound words. Which of the following is a compound word? (item 23 on page 9 in test booklet A - story 4)			
A	illness	A 11.5	0.17
B	fingertips	B 58.6	0.26
C	communicate	C 5.1	0.12
D	handicapped	D 14.1	0.19
E	I don't know.	E 7.4	0.14
	omit	1.8	0.0
What is the root word of STARTED? (item 5 on page 3 in test booklet B - story 1)			
A	sta	A 1.3	0.06
B	star	B 6.1	0.13
C	start	C 85.6	0.19
D	starts	D 4.4	0.11
E	I don't know.	E 2.1	0.08
	omit	0.4	0.0
UNTIE and PREVIEW both have prefixes. Which of the words below has a prefix? (item 12 on page 5 in test booklet B - story 2)			
A	family	A 7.8	0.14
B	foolish	B 10.3	0.16
C	himself	C 12.7	0.18
D	returned	D 49.6	0.27
E	I don't know.	E 16.7	0.20
	omit	0.6	0.0

OBJECTIVE 1.4.	The student should be able to use context to determine the meaning of a word in a sentence.

			P. Value	Stand. Error
At the end of the story it says, "The problems THEY caused make a very funny story". Who are THEY? (item 15 on page 7 in test booklet A - story 3)				
A	Mr. Popper's penguins	A	81.6	0.21
B	Mr. Popper's children	B	3.9	0.10
C	the keeper of the aquarium	C	2.5	0.08
D	Mr. Popper and Admiral Drake	D	5.5	0.12
E	I don't know.	E	5.7	0.12
	Omit		0.7	0.0
The story says, "Helen had MASTERED both the manual and the braille alphabets..." What is the meaning of the word MASTERED in th story? (item 20 on page 8 in test booklet A - st				
A	taught		15.4	0.19
[illegible]	started		3.3	0.10
C	learned		8.2	0.27
D	controlled		.4	0.22
E	I don't know.	E	.5	0.16
	Omit		1.2	0.0
The story says, "Amy gave THEM some food." Who is THEM? (item 3 on page 2 in test booklet B - story 1)				
A	some ants	A	6.0	0.13
B	some birds	B	2.9	0.09
C	some trees	C	0.3	0.03
D	some children	D	88.5	0.17
E	I don't know.	E	1.9	0.07
	Omit		0.2	0.0
The story says..."Then you can shoot several and have a lot of meat." SEVERAL means: (item 9 on page 4 in test booklet B - story 2)				
A	a gun	A	4.8	0.12
B	a rabbit	B	7.6	0.14
C	a few rabbits	C	78.1	0.22
D	birds and animals	D	4.7	0.11
E	I don't know.	E	4.1	0.11
	Omit		0.5	0.0

OBJECTIVE 1.5.	The student should be able to use a dictionary through a knowledge of alphabetical order, guide words, etc.

Which one of the following words appears FIRST in a dictionary?
(item 6 on page 3 in test booklet A - story 1)

		P. Value	Stand. Error
A	past	A 7.3	0.14
B	park	B 89.6	0.25
C	picnic	C 9.3	0.16
D	playground	D 4.7	0.11
E	I don't know.	E 8.6	0.15
	Omit	0.4	0.0

Which of the following shows you the correct way to say RABBIT?
(item 12 on page 5 in test booklet A - story 2)

		P. Value	Stand. Error
A	rab it	A 39.0	0.26
B	rab it	B 7.5	0.14
C	rab it	C 8.9	0.15
D	ra bit	D 31.1	0.25
E	I don't know.	E 12.5	0.18
	Omit	0.7	0.0

Look at this dictionary page:
Which ONE of the following words would also be on this page?
(item 10 on page 5 in test booklet B - story 2)

rent
.
.
.
rope

		P. Value	Stand. Error
A	rabbit	A 18.7	0.21
B	river	B 42.6	0.27
C	rubber	C 4.9	0.12
D	trap	D 8.1	0.15
E	I don't know.	E 21.9	0.22
	Omit	2.1	0.0

The story says..."Mr. Popper was a house painter." Which of the following dictionary meanings fits the word PAINTER as it is used here?
(item 18 on page 7 in test booklet B - story 3)

		P. Value	Stand. Error
A	an artist	A 14.1	0.19
B	an American mountain lion	B 0.9	0.05
C	a rope on the front of a boat	C 1.1	0.06
D	a person who paints woodwork	D 76.4	0.23
E	I don't know.	E 5.7	0.13
	Omit	1.3	0.0

DOMAIN 2. COMPREHENSION OF PROSE MATERIALS

OBJECTIVE 2.1.	The student should be able to identify the main idea of a paragraph or longer passage.

			P. Value	Stand. Error
What is this story mainly about? (item 1 on page 2 in test booklet A - story 1)				
A	An ant and a grasshopper.	A	3.1	0.09
B	An ant that went on a picnic.	B	74.3	0.23
C	Some children who had a picnic.	C	13.8	0.18
D	A park where you could have picnics.	D	5.6	0.12
E	I don't know.	E	2.6	0.08
	Omit		0.3	0.0
What is this story mainly about? (item 13 on page 6 in test booklet A - story 3)				
A	A man who looked after ten babies.	A	5.2	0.12
B	A man who kept penguins in his home.	B	78.4	0.22
C	A man who went to look for penguins.	C	7.1	0.14
D	A man who gave penguins to an aquarium.	D	5.3	0.12
E	I don't know.	E	3.4	0.10
	Omit		0.5	0.0
What lesson can you learn from this story? (item 7 on page 4 in test booklet B - story 2)				
A	A rabbit is never easy to trap.	A	23.1	0.23
B	Too many cooks spoil the broth.	B	1.4	0.06
C	Hunters are smarter than rabbits.	C	4.0	0.11
D	Having something is better than risking having nothing.	D	66.1	0.26
E	I don't know.	E	5.0	0.12
	Omit		0.3	0.0
What is this story about? (item 19 on page 8 in test booklet B - story 4)				
A	A person who was born blind.	A	9.6	0.16
B	A famous speaker who became blind and deaf.	B	7.8	0.14
C	A blind teacher who taught deaf people to speak.	C	4.2	0.11
D	A blind and deaf girl who learned to speak, read and write.	D	72.3	0.24
E	I don't know.	E	4.8	0.11
	Omit		1.2	0.0

OBJECTIVE 2.2.	The student should be able to identify and relate important and supporting details.

What did John think of Sam's plan?
(item 7 on page 4 in test booklet A - story 2)

			P. Value	Stand. Error
A	He didn't like the idea.	A	90.3	0.16
B	He thought it might work.	B	3.9	0.10
C	He thought it was very funny.	C	1.8	0.07
D	He thought it was a splendid idea.	D	2.5	0.08
E	I don't know.	E	1.1	0.06
	Omit		0.3	0.0

When did Helen Keller study the problems of the blind?
(item 21 on page 9 in test booklet A - story 4)

A	As a subject in college.	A	11.6	0.17
B	Before deciding to go to college.	B	7.0	0.14
C	After she graduated from college.	C	48.4	0.27
D	During the time she was taught by Miss Sullivan.	D	24.1	0.23
E	I don't know.	E	7.5	0.14
	Omit		1.1	0.0

Where was the picnic?
(item 1 on page 2 in test booklet B - story 1)

A	in a park	A	94.6	0.12
B	by a river	B	1.3	0.6
C	up in a tree	C	1.2	0.6
D	in a playground	D	1.2	0.6
E	I don't know.	E	1.3	0.6
	Omit		0.2	0.0

Which of the following is true of Admiral Drake?
(item 14 on page 6 in test booklet B - story 3)

A	He made refrigerators.	A	3.2	0.10
B	He was at the North Pole.	B	16.6	0.20
C	He wanted a penguin for a pet.	C	11.3	0.17
D	He sent a penguin to Mr. Popper.	D	62.4	0.26
E	I don't know.	E	5.2	0.12
	Omit		0.8	0.0

OBJECTIVE 2.3.	The student should be able to determine the sequence of events in a paragraph or longer passage.

			P. Value	Stand.Error
What did Amy do FIRST in the story? (item 2 on page 2 in test booklet A - story 1)				
A	She had a picnic.	A	6.0	0.13
B	She ate her lunch.	B	10.1	0.16
C	She climbed a tree.	C	1.0	0.05
D	She went to a park.	D	80.8	0.21
E	I don't know.	E	1.4	0.06
	Omit		0.4	0.0
Which one of these events happened LAST? (item 19 on page 8 in test booklet A - story 4)				
A	Helen learned braille.	A	7.2	0.14
B	Helen was born in 1880.	B	7.3	0.14
C	Helen entered Radcliffe College.	C	65.0	0.26
D	Helen became a pupil of Anne Sullivan.	D	11.6	0.17
E	I don't know.	E	8.0	0.15
	Omit		0.9	0.0
What happened FIRST in the story? (item 8 on page 4 in test booklet B - story 2)				
A	Sam let his rabbit go.	A	8.8	0.15
B	John cooked his rabbit.	B	8.7	0.15
C	Sam followed his rabbit into the woods.	C	6.6	0.13
D	The hunters found rabbits in their traps.	D	72.7	0.24
E	I don't know.	E	2.7	0.09
	Omit		0.4	0.0
Which of these happened SECOND in the story? (item 13 on page 6 in test booklet B - story 3)				
A	Mr. Popper wrote to Admiral Drake.	A	31.2	0.25
B	Greta and Captain Cook had ten babies.	B	8.2	0.15
C	Admiral Drake sent Mr. Popper a live penguin.	C	49.7	0.27
D	Mr. Popper had a refrigeration plant put in his cellar.	D	5.3	0.12
E	I don't know.	E	4.3	0.11
	Omit		1.0	0.0

OBJECTIVE 2.4.	The student should be able to apply logical reasoning skills in the reading of a paragraph or longer passage.

		P. Value	Stand. Error
What did the traps do to the rabbits? (item 8 on page 4 in test booklet A - story 2)			
A	killed them	A 14.8	0.19
B	caught them alive and unharmed	B 57.1	0.27
C	caught, skinned and cooked them	C 7.8	0.14
D	crippled them so they could not run	D 13.3	0.18
E	I don't know.	E 6.5	0.13
	Omit	0.4	0.0
According to the story, which of the following is a FACT? (item 9 on page 4 in test booklet A - story 2)			
A	John is foolish.	A 24.8	0.23
B	Sam let his rabbit go.	B 48.0	0.27
C	Sam is a clever hunter.	C 10.2	0.16
D	All traps kill animals.	D 7.3	0.14
E	I don't know.	E 8.6	0.15
	Omit	1.0	0.0
Why did Mr. Popper make Captain Cook's home in the refrigerator? (item 14 on page 6 in test booklet A - story 3)			
A	Penguins like milk.	A 0.7	0.04
B	Captain Cook was lonely.	B 8.3	0.15
C	Penguins like to live in cold places.	C 83.4	0.20
D	Captain Cook had always lived in a refrigerator.	D 4.3	0.11
E	I don't know.	E 2.6	0.08
	Omit	0.7	0.0
Which of these statements is NOT important in the story? (item 16 on page 7 in test booklet A - story 3)			
A	Mr. Popper was a house painter.	A 59.3	0.26
B	Mr. Popper wrote to Admiral Drake.	B 8.2	0.15
C	Captain Cook lived in a refrigerator.	C 6.9	0.14
D	Mr. Popper thought penguins were funny.	D 19.7	0.21
E	I don't know.	E 4.5	0.11
	Omit	1.0	0.0

			P. Value	Stand. Error
What was the weather like that day? (item 2 on page 2 in test booklet B - story 1)				
A	wet	A	2.1	0.08
B	cold	B	3.8	0.10
C	foggy	C	0.8	0.05
D	sunny	D	84.8	0.19
E	I don't know.	E	8.3	0.15
	Omit		0.2	0.0
How did you know that this story is NOT true? (item 4 on page 3 in test booklet B - story 1)				
A	Ants do not eat.	A	2.3	0.08
B	Ants eat lunch at home.	B	4.3	0.11
C	Ants are not found in parks.	C	3.9	0.10
D	Ants do not give children food.	D	78.6	0.22
E	I don't know.	E	10.6	0.17
	Omit		0.2	0.0
What does the author describe about Helen Keller? (item 20 on page 8 in test booklet B - story 4)				
A	how she looked	A	3.2	0.10
B	how she played the piano	B	1.5	0.07
C	what she liked to read	C	4.9	0.12
D	what she learned to do	D	83.2	0.20
E	I don't know.	E	5.5	0.12
	Omit		1.5	0.0
Which one of these statements about Helen Keller is false? (item 21 on page 9 in test booklet B - story 4)				
A	She could enjoy music.	A	45.4	0.27
B	She could travel widely.	B	21.0	0.22
C	She could read and write.	C	13.8	0.19
D	She could communicate with other people	D	11.9	0.17
E	I don't know.	E	6.2	0.13
	Omit		1.4	0.0

OBJECTIVE 2.5.	The student should be able to determine the purpose for reading a paragraph or longer passage.

			P. Value	Stand. Error
Why would you read the rest of the story about Amy the Ant? (item 3 on page 2 in test booklet A - story 1)				
A	To learn about ant families.	A	10.1	0.16
B	To read a mystery story.	B	3.8	0.10
C	To enjoy a make-believe story.	C	62.0	0.26
D	To learn how children solve their problems.	D	12.3	0.18
E	I don't know.	E	11.2	0.17
	Omit		0.4	0.0
Why do you think the author wrote this story? (item 10 on page 5 in test booklet A - story 2)				
A	to scare you	A	0.9	0.05
B	to make you laugh	B	2.2	0.08
C	to teach you something	C	88.7	0.17
D	to share some beautiful language	D	3.4	0.10
E	I don't know.	E	4.4	0.11
	Omit		0.3	0.0
Why do you think the auther wrote about Mr. Popper's penguins? (item 15 on page 7 in test booklet B - story 3)				
A	to scare you	A	0.9	0.05
B	to make you laugh	B	41.2	0.27
C	to teach you about explorers	C	5.5	0.12
D	to teach you facts about penguins	D	43.2	0.27
E	I don't know.	E	7.4	0.14
	Omit		0.8	0.0
Why might you read Helen Keller's story about herself? (item 22 on page 9 in test booklet B - story 4)				
A	to read a humorous story	A	4.9	0.12
B	to find out about eyesight	B	12.7	0.18
C	to learn about someone else's life ...	C	52.9	0.27
D	to find out about new teaching methods	D	19.2	0.21
E	I don't know.	E	8.0	0.15
	Omit		2.2	0.0

DOMAIN 3. COMPREHENSION OF FUNCTIONAL MATERIALS

OBJECTIVE 3.1.	The student should be able to locate information using such reference aides as tables of contents, titles and classifications.

			P. Value	Stand. Error
Which book would tell you what penguins eat? (item 18 on page 7 in test booklet A - story 3)				
A	an atlas	A	8.6	0.15
B	a dictionary	B	13.7	0.18
C	an encyclopedia	C	68.4	0.25
D	a telephone directory	D	1.0	0.05
E	I don't know.	E	6.8	0.14
	Omit		1.4	0.0
If you wanted more information about Helen Keller's life, in which part of the library would you look? (item 22 on page 9 in test booklet A - story 4)				
A	Fiction.	A	38.9	0.26
B	Non-fiction.	B	50.6	0.27
C	I don't know.	C	8.7	0.15
	Omit		1.8	0.0
If you wanted to read more adventure stories about Amy the Ant, which book would you read? (item 6 on page 3 in test booklet B - story 1)				
A	The Cat in the Hat.	A	1.9	0.07
B	Golden Book of Insects.	B	7.9	0.15
C	Amy the Ant Goes to Sea.	C	83.1	0.20
D	Junior Science Encyclopedia.	D	2.1	0.08
E	I don't know.	E	4.6	0.11
	Omit		0.4	0.0

	P. Value	Stand. Error

Here is a page from a book called ALL ABOUT PENGUINS.
(item 17 on page 7 in test booklet B - story 3)

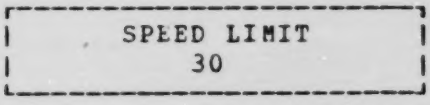
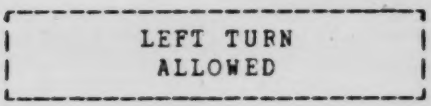
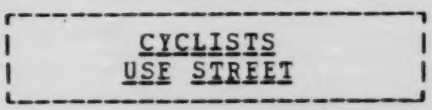
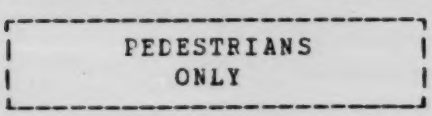
Table of Contents

Penguin Babies .....Page 1
Food for Penguins .....Page 26
Penguins in the Water .....Page 38
Penguins on the Land .....Page 54

If you wanted to find out how penguins swim, on which page would you start to look?

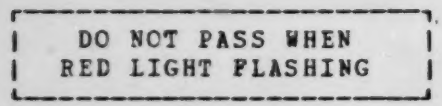
A	Page 1	A	5.4	0.12
B	Page 26	B	2.6	0.09
C	Page 38	C	83.9	0.20
D	Page 54	D	2.1	0.08
E	I don't know.	E	4.3	0.11
	Omit		1.3	0.0

OBJECTIVE 3.2. The student should be able to understand signs.

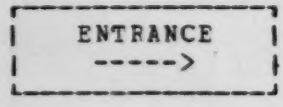
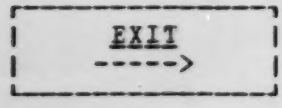
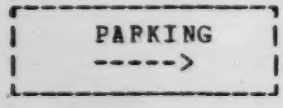
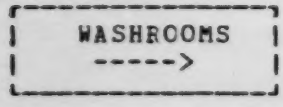
			P. Value	Stand. Error
If you are walking, which sign tells you what to do? (item 24 on page 10 in test booklet A)				
A		A	3.3	0.10
B		B	3.5	0.10
C		C	86.7	0.18
D		D	3.3	0.10
E	I don't know.	E	1.6	0.07
	Omit		1.4	0.0
Which sign shows where you should ride your bicycle? (item 25 on page 10 in test booklet A)				
A		A	1.4	0.06
B		B	54.6	0.27
C		C	37.2	0.26
D		D	2.7	0.09
E	I don't know.	E	2.4	0.08
	Omit		1.5	0.0

		P. Value	Stand. Error

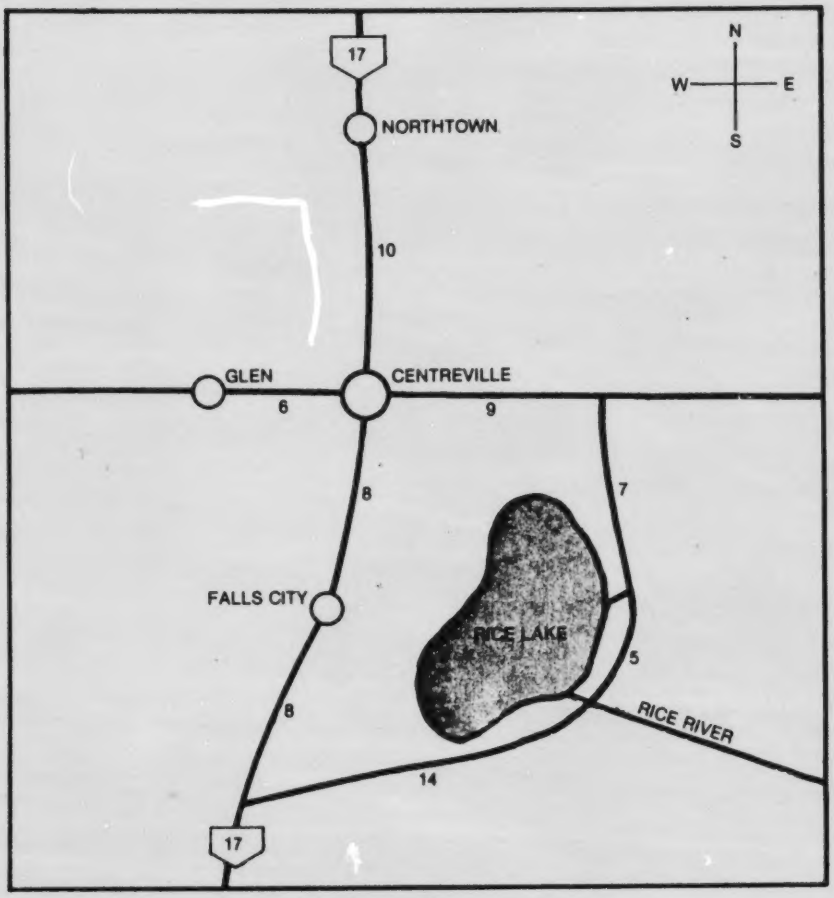
If you needed to take a bus, which sign would you look for?
(item 24 on page 10 in test booklet B)

A		.....	A	96.4	0.10
B			B	0.2	0.02
C			C	0.3	0.03
D			D	1.4	0.06
E	I don't know.		E	0.2	0.02
	Omit			1.6	0.0

Which sign shows you the way out of a building?
(item 25 on page 10 in test booklet B)

A			A	7.9	0.14
B		.....	B	88.6	0.17
C			C	1.0	0.05
D			D	0.5	0.04
E	I don't know.		E	0.5	0.04
	Omit			1.5	0.0

OBJECTIVE 3.3.	The student should be able to understand road maps.



(NOTE: The following 4 questions refers to the map on the previous page)

		P. Value	Stand. Error
Can you drive all the way from Northtown to Falls City on Highway 17? (item 28 on page 12 in test booklet A)			
A	Yes	A 79.5	0.22
B	No	B 16.6	0.20
C	I don't know.	C 1.8	0.07
	Omit	1.9	0.0
Is Centreville farther west than Glen? (item 29 on page 12 in test booklet A)			
A	Yes	A 28.6	0.24
B	No	B 65.0	0.26
C	I don't know.	C 4.2	0.11
	Omit	2.1	0.0
This map would help you to (item 28 on page 12 in test booklet B)			
A	find the elevation of Rice Lake.	A 37.4	0.26
B	drive from Glen to Falls City.	B 33.7	0.25
C	locate the Northtown police station.	C 4.4	0.11
D	find out how many people live in Centreville.	D 4.7	0.11
E	I don't know.	E 15.1	0.19
	Omit	3.4	0.0
Is Falls City east of Rice Lake? (item 29 on page 12 in test booklet B)			
A	Yes	A 32.5	0.25
B	No	B 60.7	0.26
C	I don't know.	C 2.8	0.09
	Omit	3.9	0.0

OBJECTIVE 3.4. The student should be able to understand product labels.

		P. Value	Stand. Error

ABC BUG SPRAY

Kills: spiders, roaches, ants and most crawling insects.

Directions: Spray surfaces over which insects may crawl: doorways, window ledges, cracks, etc. Hold can approximately 10 inches from surface. Do not use near uncovered food or small children. Toxic.

How far from the surface to be sprayed should you hold the can?
(item 26 on page 11 in test booklet A)

			P. Value	Stand. Error
A	1 inch.	A	1.3	0.06
B	2 inches.	B	2.2	0.08
C	6 inches.	C	3.5	0.10
D	10 inches.	D	88.6	0.17
E	I don't know.	E	2.6	0.08
	Omit		1.7	0.0

Where would you NOT use the spray?
(item 27 on page 11 in test booklet A)

			P. Value	Stand. Error
A	doorways	A	5.2	0.12
B	in a baby's room	B	82.4	0.20
C	basement corners	C	2.3	0.08
D	around window ledges	D	4.4	0.11
E	I don't know.	E	3.6	0.10
	Omit		1.8	0.0

		P. Value	Stand. Error
Which of the following will probably NOT be killed by the spray? (item 26 on page 11 in test booklet B)			
A	ants	A 5.8	0.13
B	flies	B 64.0	0.26
C	roaches	C 13.2	0.18
D	spiders	D 8.2	0.15
E	I don't know.	E 6.8	0.14
	Omit	1.8	0.0
The last word in the directions is TOXIC. What does this word mean? (item 27 on page 11 in test booklet B)			
A	smelly	A 6.0	0.13
B	frozen	B 2.6	0.09
C	poisonous	C 68.4	0.25
D	unpleasant	D 5.6	0.12
E	I don't know.	E 15.0	0.19
	Omit	2.2	0.0

OBJECTIVE 3.5. The student should be able to understand arithmetic story problems.

	P. Value	Stand. Error

NORTHERN LIGHTS DRIVE-IN

MENU

Hamburger	70¢
Cheeseburger	75¢
Peanut Butter Sandwich	50¢
Milk	25¢
Milkshake	45¢
Coffee	20¢
Pie	50¢
Ice Cream Cone	25¢

Dan orders a cheeseburger and a strawberry milkshake. To find out how much he should pay you would add:
(item 30 on page 13 in test booklet A)

A	70¢ and 25¢	A	1.4	0.06
B	75¢ and 25¢	B	2.4	0.08
C	75¢ and 45¢	C	86.5	0.18
D	75¢ and 70¢	D	1.8	0.07
E	I don't know.	E	3.8	0.10
	Omit		3.8	0.0

There are three people in the Evans family. At the drive-in they order four hamburgers and pay for the order with a ten dollar bill. If you want to find out how much they spent, which one of the following would be important?
(item 31 on page 13 in test booklet A)

A	there are three people in the family.	A	9.2	0.16
B	hamburgers cost 70¢ each.	B	43.8	0.27
C	they paid with a ten dollar bill.	C	26.6	0.24
D	cheeseburgers cost 75¢ each.	D	5.5	0.12
E	I don't know.	E	10.6	0.16
	Omit		4.2	0.0

		P. Value	Stand. Error

Sharon orders a peanut butter sandwich, a glass of milk and a strawberry ice cream cone. To find out how much she should pay, you would add:
(item 30 on page 13 in test booklet B)

A	70¢, 45¢ and 25¢	A	2.0	0.07
B	70¢, 25¢ and 25¢	B	2.7	0.09
C	50¢, 45¢ and 25¢	C	5.1	0.12
D	50¢, 25¢ and 25¢	D	80.3	0.21
E	I don't know.	E	5.2	0.12
	Omit		4.4	0.0

Brian's mother gives him five dollars to buy hamburgers and milkshakes for the family. He takes the five dollars and rides his bike to the drive-in. Brian buys four hamburgers, three chocolate milkshakes and one strawberry milkshake. He wants to know how much change he should receive.

Which ONE of the following statements is NOT important in solving this problem?
(item 31 on page 13 in test booklet B)

A	Brian's mother gives him five dollars.	A	14.0	0.19
B	Brian rides his bike to the drive-in.	B	51.2	0.27
C	Brian buys four hamburgers.	C	4.6	0.11
D	Brian also buys three chocolate milkshakes and one strawberry milkshake.	D	14.6	0.19
E	I don't know.	E	10.4	0.16
	Omit		4.7	0.0

APPENDIX I-B

READING TEST

Directions for Teachers

Teacher Comments

LANGUAGE B. C.

GRADE/YEAR 4 READING ASSESSMENT

ADMINISTRATION DIRECTIONS

FOR TEACHERS

BEFORE THE ASSESSMENT

1. You should have a pamphlet providing background information on the Learning Assessment Programme. Please read it and the specific directions which follow.

2. As you pre-read these directions, you should refer to a pupil test booklet. Note: there are two different test booklets. Questions differ between the booklets but instructions are identical. The booklets have been alternately arranged in your test package and should be distributed to pupils in the order they appear. Each student should respond to only one booklet.

3. You will need to know your school code number. Your principal has received this with the other materials sent to your school.

4. Each pupil will need two sharpened pencils and an eraser. You may want to have some spares handy at your desk. Pupils should also have a book or magazine at their desks to read quietly on completion of the test.

5. Part I of the test measures visual recognition of words. If you have any doubt that pupils will clearly understand your oral reading of the words and sentences, you may wish to arrange for someone else to administer this section.

6. The actual test will require less than one hour to complete. However, you should ensure that you have ninety minutes available to allow for pupil preparation before the test and the collection of pupil background information following it.

ASSESSMENT - COVER PAGE

In advance of the administration, the following should be on the chalkboard:

School Code ☐☐☐☐

Do you live in Canada? A. Yes B. No

1. Before you distribute the booklets, check that each pupil has two pencils, one eraser, and something to read following the test. Tell the pupils that the purpose of this test is to get a picture of how well boys and girls in year 4 are able to read. Tell them not to put their names on the booklets that they will receive and not to open them until told to do so.

2. When the booklets have been distributed, have the pupils copy the school code number from the board onto the cover page. (Please check that this has been done correctly.)

3. Read aloud the cover page instructions for marking answers and have pupils complete the example. Check for understanding and answer any questions. Then tell the pupils to open the booklet to page 1.

Page 1 - RECOGNIZING WORDS

1. Read the instructions aloud and do the example. Say: "Tall" (pause) "The logger climbed the tall fir tree." (pause) "Tall".

2. Wait about 10 seconds to permit pupils to circle the letter beside an answer.

3. Check for misunderstandings.

4. Allow about 10 seconds between each of the following twelve items.

   1) because ... The dog howled because it was hungry ... because
   (NOTE: check to see that pupils locate question 2 accurately)

   2) already ... We were already finished the game when they arrived ... already

   3) horse ... I was thrown from my horse as it jumped the fence ... horse

   4) gone ... Have you ever gone to the Williams Lake Stampede? ... gone

   5) like ... I like to eat corn on the cob ... like

   6) said ... "Please come into my office", said the doctor ... said

   7) went ... The fishing boats went out at dawn ... went

   8) sure ... Are you sure that this is the right road? ... sure

   9) use ... We had to use a nylon rope to climb the cliff ... use

   10) who ... Who was the first person to fly across the Pacific Ocean? ... who

   11) nothing ... The detectives found nothing in the locked room ... nothing

   12) town ... Parksville is a town on Vancouver Island ... town

Page 2 - UNDERSTANDING STORIES AND APPLYING READING SKILLS

1. Have all pupils turn to page 2.

2. Say: "Now you will have some stories, signs and maps to read. Each item will have questions for you to answer. Answer each question by circling the letter beside your answer. Try to do every question. If you don't know the answer, circle the letter beside 'I don't know', and go on to the next question. Keep working through each page until you see the word STOP. Are there any questions?" (Take time to answer pupil question). Then say: "You will have 40 minutes to work. If you finish early, check back on your answers, then close your booklet and place if face up on your desk. You may then read quietly. Begin now."

3. Record the relevant times on this chart for your reference.

Time started	_____
Plus	20 min.
Time to remind	_____
Plus	20 min.
Time to say "STOP"	_____

4. Individual pupils may raise their hands for assistance. Try to encourage each one to read and respond to the best of his/her ability. Try not to give answers or to read the items for a pupil.

5. After 20 minutes, say, "Half your time is now over. Try to answer every question".

6. After 40 minutes, say, "STOP", put down your pencils and close your booklets."

7. Before going on to the last page (GENERAL INFORMATION) you may wish to have the class stand and stretch.

Page 14 - GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Say: "Now turn to the back page of your booklet. Here are some questions about you and your family. Listen while I read each question. Then circle the letter beside your answer".

2. Read each question aloud. Give individual pupils as much help as is necessary to provide accurate information.

AFTER THE ASSESSMENT

1. When the GENERAL INFORMATION section is complete, collect the booklets and return them to your school office. Please bundle and return unused booklets separately.

2. Your participation and cooperation are appreciated. We would value your comments on both general and specific aspects of this reading assessment. Please use the reverse side of this sheet, tear off and return it with the completed booklets.

READING ASSESSMENT

TEACHER COMMENT FORM

To assist us in preparing future assessment programmes, the Learning Assessment Branch would appreciate your taking a few minutes to comment on this one.

1. How did the children react to the test?

	None	Some	Most	All
a) They were frustrated because it was too difficult.	____	____	____	____
b) They were distracted because it was too easy.	____	____	____	____
c) They enjoyed taking the test.	____	____	____	____

2. Did you have any particular problems in administering the test? (Information, instructions, time, special needs of individual children, etc.)

3. What recommendations or suggestions would you make for future assessments?

Please detach and return with the package of completed test booklets. Thank you for your time.

GRADE/YEAR 4 - READING ASSESSMENT

TEACHER COMMENTS

The reading test was administered during the week of January 5 - 9 to all Grade/Year 4 students in the province. A total of 34,639 students or 94% of the total grade 4 population was tested.

A teacher comment form was included with the assessment materials. A summary of teacher reactions and comments to the Grade 4 assessment are presented below and are based on the 1,228 forms that were returned.

A. HOW DID THE CHILDREN REACT TO THE TEST?

(Percentage of teacher responses are presented in brackets. For example, 58% of teachers said that none of their students were frustrated with the test.)

	None	Some	Most	All	Total Teacher Response
1) They were frustrated because it was too difficult	618 (58%)	442 (41%)	8 (1%)	- -	1068
2) They were distracted because it was too easy	466 (44%)	468 (44%)	113 (11%)	12 (1%)	1059
3) They enjoyed taking the test	31 (3%)	115 (10%)	671 (56%)	390 (32%)	1207

Overall it appears that while some students were frustrated or distracted because the test was either too difficult or too easy, 88% of the teachers felt that most or all of their students enjoyed taking the test.

B. DID YOU HAVE ANY PARTICULAR PROBLEMS IN ADMINISTERING THE TEST? (INFORMATION, INSTRUCTIONS, TIME, SPECIAL NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN, ETC.)

WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS WOULD YOU MAKE FOR FUTURE ASSESSMENTS?

About 1075 teachers provided comments of one form or another. All responses were read, tallied and are summarized as follows:

1. ADMINISTRATION

There seems to have been few problems in administering the test apart from the time allotment and scattered incidents of pupil confusion over particular questions or directions. It would appear, though, that most teachers thought both the teacher instructions and pupil directions to be very clear. The idea of circling the letter beside the correct answer seemed to be foreign to the routine practice of answering for a great many pupils. Underlining seems to be more common.

A very small number of teachers were opposed to this survey, but several teachers and pupils were opposed to the anonymity. Suggestions were made that perhaps a tear-off section at the top of the front cover could be used. Teachers also expressed a desire to have scoring keys included with their administration sheets so that they personally could score their student's tests.

2. TIME

Nearly all the teachers felt that the 40 minutes allotted for Part II was much too long. Requests were made to either decrease the allottted time or increase the length of the test. At the same time, there were some teachers who indicated that those students who normally have difficulty reading required the full 40 minutes.

Several teachers would also like to have such a test administered at a different time of year. Some suggestions were late October to early November, or just before Easter.

3. THE TEST

Most teachers and students appreciated the format of the test, particularly the large print, though several thought that two example questions for each section would be helpful.

a) Part I - Recognizing Words

Many teachers stated that their children found this section to be easy. Some teachers suggested that perhaps the words were not up to Grade 4 vocabulary and that possibly a gradual rise to more difficult words from numbers 1 - 12 would have been more valuable.

b) Part II - Understanding Stories

Most students seemed to have had little trouble with this section, although several teachers made note of particular questions which they thought ambiguous or confusing to some students. One question that appeared to be confusing to more students is the dictionary page question in both booklets, the confusion apparently due to the lack of similarity between the example page and an actual dictionary page.

Generally, the greater portion of students surveyed seemed to find the whole test relatively easy (little distinction was ever made between booklets A and B). There were many requests by teachers to make the test longer and more difficult.

There was some concern expressed about the validity of this type of survey. Also, concern was expressed for individual pupils of Remedial Reading groups, new Canadian status, and non-English backgrounds and their place in this type of survey. Should they be excluded?

4. General Information

Using a ratio of incidents of confusion per the number of questions in each section, it would appear that this section was more confusing than the actual body of the test. The pupils seemed to be certain only of their age and sex.

Overall, the test was comparatively easy on the teachers and easy for the students.

As usual there were requests by the teachers for the results and statistics of the tests on individual, classroom, school, district, and provincial levels.

APPENDIX II-A

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Basic Data

1976 LEARNING ASSESSMENT - WRITTEN COMPOSITION

BASIC DATA

		Grade 8		Grade 12	
		Sample Size	%	Sample Size	%
1. Total		1,864	100	1,819	100
2. By School District -	01	28	2	17	1
	02	0	0	24	1
	04	22	1	0	0
	07	27	1	26	1
	09	0	0	22	1
	11	31	2	19	1
	12	0	0	23	1
	14	0	0	18	1
	15	30	2	0	0
	16	31	2	13	1
	17	16	1	0	0
	18	24	1	29	2
	22	49	3	59	3
	23	77	4	56	3
	24	76	4	64	4
	27	23	1	15	1
	28	22	1	13	1
	30	0	0	21	1
	31	24	1	0	0
	33	29	2	29	2
	34	0	0	19	1
	35	18	1	15	1
	36	104	6	85	5
	37	46	2	87	5
	38	52	3	60	3
	39	217	12	297	16
	40	28	2	28	2
	41	88	5	122	7
	42	26	1	27	2
	43	82	1	77	4
	44	68	4	86	5
	45	27	1	50	3
	46	31	2	0	0
	47	30	2	36	2
	49	22	1	0	0
	50	15	1	0	0
	54	20	1	0	0
	55	28	2	0	0
	56	0	0	20	1
	57	51	3	36	2
	59	22	1	0	0
	60	0	0	30	2
	61	112	6	84	5
	62	51	3	0	0

1976 LEARNING ASSESSMENT - WRITTEN COMPOSITION (continued)

BASIC DATA

		Grade 8		Grade 12	
		Sample Size	%	Sample Size	%
2.	By School District (Continued)				
	63	27	1	24	1
	65	22	1	30	2
	68	28	2	28	2
	70	20	1	31	2
	71	28	2	27	2
	72	0	0	26	1
	75	0	0	24	1
	84	29	2	0	0
	85	18	1	0	0
	88	23	1	22	1
	89	22	1	0	0
3.	By Age				
	8 years	1	<1	0	0
	11 "	1	<1	0	0
	12 "	30	2	0	0
	13 "	1,397	76	0	0
	14 "	333	18	1	<1
	15 "	63	3	1	<1
	16 "	5	<1	67	4
	17 "	0	0	1,369	77
	18 "	0	0	287	16
	19 "	0	0	47	3
	20 "	0	0	4	<1
	21 "	0	0	3	<1
	22 years +	1	<1	3	1
	Missing	33		37	
	Mean Age	13.2 yrs		17.2 yrs	
4.	By Sex				
	Males	894	48	831	46
	Females	958	52	972	54
	Missing	12		16	
5.	By Number of Schools Attended				
	1	58	3	11	1
	2	629	34	236	13
	3	462	25	487	27
	4	301	16	361	20
	5	172	9	294	16
	6	95	5	170	9
	7 (or more)	135	7	250	14
	Missing	12		10	
	Mean no. of schools	3.4		4.2	

1976 LEARNING ASSESSMENT - WRITTEN COMPOSITION (Continued)

BASIC DATA

	Grade 8		Grade 12	
	Sample Size	%	Sample Size	%
6. By Number of Hours Watching Television on each School-Day				
None	54	3	76	4
Less than 1 hour	75	4	307	17
About 1 hour	186	10	451	25
About 2 hours	399	22	498	28
About 3 hours	473	25	298	17
4 hours or more	673	36	169	9
Missing	4		20	
Mean No. of Hours	2.8		1.8	
7. By Whether Born in Canada				
Yes - born in Canada	1,640	90	1,618	89
No - not born in Canada	192	10	191	11
- in Canada less than 1 year	15	1	7	<1
- in Canada about a year	6	<1	5	<1
- in Canada about 2 years	20	1	26	1
- in Canada 3 years or more	151	8	153	8
Missing	32		10	
8. By Whether a Language Other than English was spoken before beginning School				
Yes - another language spoken	308	17	364	20
No	1,520	83	1,429	80
Missing	36		26	
9. By Whether English is the Only Language spoken in the home				
Yes - only language	1,255	68	1,270	70
No	591	32	534	30
Missing	18		15	

1976 LEARNING ASSESSMENT - WRITTEN COMPOSITION (continued)

BASIC DATA

			Grade 8 Sample Size	Grade 8 %	Grade 12 Sample Size	Grade 12 %
10. By Whether a Language Other than English or French is Read						
		Yes - can read other language	261	14	350	20
		No - only English or French	1,544	86	1,408	80
		Missing	59		61	
11. Born in Canada	Eng. only at home	Other lang before school	48	3	43	2
		No other before school	1,091	60	1,122	63
	Other lang at home	Other lang before school	172	10	210	12
		No other before school	307	17	203	11
Not Born in Canada	Eng. only at home	Other lang before school	11	1	3	<1
		No other before school	76	4	79	4
	Other lang at home	Other lang before school	74	4	102	6
		No other lang before school	20	2	7	<1
	Missing		55		50	

APPENDIX II-B

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Statistical Summary

Grade 8

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Has a developed argument or thesis

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 67%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	69	1276
No	28	519
Not Checked	3	59
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
69	1	67	71	Total B.C.	---
65	2	62	68	Males	Females > Males (p = .001)
73	1	70	75	Females	
71	1	69	74	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
61	2	57	66	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
71	2	67	74	1 or 2	no difference (p = .567)
66	2	62	70	3	
68	3	63	73	4	
70	3	65	76	5 or 6	
69	4	61	77	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
70	6	58	83	None	no difference (p = .625)
70	3	64	75	1 or less than 1	
67	2	63	72	2	
70	2	66	75	3	
68	2	65	72	4 or more	

Has a developed argument or thesis

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
69	1	66	71	Born in Canada	no difference
73	3	66	79	Not Born in Canada	(p = .241)
68	1	66	71	English only in home	no difference
70	2	67	74	Other lang. in home	(p = .328)
73	3	67	78	Read other lang.	no difference
68	1	66	71	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .134)
78	5	69	88	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
70	4	63	77	Cdn. Non Eng.	
69	3	64	74	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .481)
68	5	58	79	Non Cdn. Eng.	
68	1	65	71	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: The essay shows a clear organizational pattern

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 70%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	47	864
No	53	987
Not Checked	<1	3
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
47	1	45	49	Total B.C.	---
43	2	40	46	Males	Females > Males (p = .002)
50	2	47	54	Females	
50	1	47	53	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
35	2	31	40	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
51	2	47	54	1 or 2	No difference (p = .078)
42	2	38	47	3	
47	3	42	53	4	
46	3	40	52	5 or 6	
44	4	35	52	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
46	7	33	60	None	No difference (p = .090)
52	3	46	58	1 or less than 1	
49	2	44	54	2	
48	2	43	52	3	
43	2	39	47	4 or more	

The essay shows a clear organizational pattern

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
47	1	44	49	Born in Canada	no difference
48	4	40	54	Not Born in Canada	(p = .621)
46	1	43	49	English only in home	no difference
48	2	44	52	Other lang. in home	(p = .486)
52	3	46	58	Read other lang.	no difference
46	1	43	48	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .069)
54	6	42	66	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
47	4	40	55	Cdn. Non Eng.	
47	3	41	53	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .425)
38	6	27	49	Non Cdn. Eng.	
46	2	43	49	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Appropriate substantiation is evident

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 63%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	49	913
No	49	916
Not Checked	1	25
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
50	1	47	52	Total B.C.	---
45	2	42	48	Males	Females > Males (p = .001)
53	2	50	56	Females	
52	1	50	55	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
41	2	36	45	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
51	2	47	55	1 or 2	No difference (p = .310)
47	2	42	52	3	
50	3	44	56	4	
51	3	45	57	5 or 6	
42	4	34	51	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
46	7	33	60	None	No difference (p = .113)
51	3	45	57	1 or less than 1	
55	2	50	60	2	
48	2	44	53	3	
47	2	43	50	4 or more	

Appropriate substantiation is evident

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
50	1	47	52	Born in Canada	no difference
45	4	38	52	Not Born in Canada	($\hat{p}$ = .237)
50	1	47	52	English only in home	no difference
48	2	44	52	Other lang. in home	(p = .597)
53	3	47	59	Read other lang.	no difference
49	1	46	51	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .172)
46	6	34	58	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
50	4	42	58	Cdn. Non Eng.	
49	3	44	55	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .177)
51	6	40	63	Non Cdn. Eng.	
49	2	47	52	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Individual paragraphs are well developed

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 73%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	30	559
No	69	1272
Not Checked	1	23
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
30	1	28	32	Total B.C.	---
25	1	23	28	Males	Females > Males (p = 0)
35	2	32	38	Females	
34	1	31	36	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
19	2	15	23	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
31	2	28	35	1 or 2	No difference (p = .139)
28	2	24	32	3	
34	3	28	39	4	
30	3	25	36	5 or 6	
22	4	15	29	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
22	6	11	34	None	Overall difference (p = 0) but Scheffé not significant
38	3	32	44	1 or less than 1	
32	2	27	36	2	
34	2	29	38	3	
25	2	21	28	4 or more	

Individual paragraphs are well developed

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
31	1	28	33	Born in Canada	no difference
29	3	22	35	Not Born in Canada	(p = .641)
31	1	29	34	English only in home	no difference
28	2	24	32	Other lang. in home	(p = .135)
31	3	25	36	Read other lang.	no difference
30	1	28	32	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .682)
28	5	18	39	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
29	3	22	36	Cdn. Non Eng.	
27	3	22	32	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .650)
30	5	20	41	Non Cdn. Eng.	
32	1	29	34	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Sentence structure is effective

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 66%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	54	1008
No	45	837
Not Checked	1	9
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
55	1	52	57	Total B.C.	---
48	2	45	52	Males	Females > Males (p = 0)
60	2	57	63	Females	
59	1	56	62	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
40	2	35	44	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
57	2	53	60	1 or 2	No difference (p = .227)
54	2	49	58	3	
56	3	50	61	4	
50	3	44	56	5 or 6	
49	4	40	57	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
56	7	42	69	None	Overall difference (p = .020) but Scheffé not significant
59	3	53	65	1 or less than 1	
57	2	52	62	2	
57	2	52	61	3	
49	2	45	53	4 or more	

Sentence structure is effective

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
55	1	52	57	Born in Canada	no difference
52	4	44	59	Not Born in Canada	(p = .395)
54	1	51	56	English only in home	no difference
56	2	52	60	Other lang. in home	(p = .258)
56	3	50	62	Read other lang.	no difference
54	1	52	56	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .621)
58	6	47	70	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
47	4	50	64	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .663)
47	3	51	62	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
51	6	40	63	Non Cdn. Eng.	
54	2	51	57	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Sentences are clear

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 64%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	48	895
No	50	933
Not Checked	1	26
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
48	1	46	51	Total B.C.	---
44	2	41	47	Males	Females > Males (p = .001)
52	2	49	55	Females	
53	1	50	55	13 years or less	'ounger'> older (p = 0)
34	2	29	38	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
50	2	46	53	1 or 2	No difference (p = .610)
48	2	43	52	3	
49	3	44	55	4	
46	3	40	52	5 or 6	
43	4	35	51	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
52	7	38	66	None	Overall difference (p = .009) 1 or less than 1 hour > 4 or more
56	3	50	62	1 or less than 1	
47	2	42	52	2	
51	2	47	56	3	
44	2	40	47	4 or more	

Sentences are

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
49	1	47	52	Born in Canada	Born in Canada > Not in Canada (p = .025)
41	4	34	48	Not Born in Canada	
49	1	46	51	English only in home	no difference (p = .649)
48	2	44	52	Other lang. in home	
46	3	40	52	Read other lang.	no difference (p = .571)
48	1	46	51	Read only Eng./Fr.	
45	6	33	56	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
50	4	42	58	Cdn. Non Eng.	
47	3	42	53	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .349)
40	6	28	51	Non Cdn. Eng.	
50	2	47	53	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Sentence structure is sophisticated

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 88%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	8	143
No	91	1686
Not Checked	1	25
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
8	1	7	9	Total B.C.	---
6	1	4	7	Males	Females > Males
10	1	8	12	Females	(p = .002)
9	1	8	11	13 years or less	Younger > older
4	1	2	6	14 years or more	(p = .001)
				No. Schools Attended	
8	1	6	10	1 or 2	No difference (p = .688)
8	1	5	10	3	
9	2	6	13	4	
6	2	3	9	5 or 6	
9	2	4	14	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
9	4	1	17	None	Overall difference (p = .005) 1 or less than 1 hour > 4 or more
12	2	8	15	1 or less than 1	
11	2	8	14	2	
7	1	5	9	3	
5	1	4	7	4 or more	

Sentence structure is sophisticated

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
8	1	6	9	Born in Canada	no difference
9	2	5	13	Not Born in Canada	(p = .471)
9	1	7	10	English only in home	no difference
6	1	4	8	Other lang. in home	(p = .115)
9	2	6	13	Read other lang.	no difference
8	1	6	9	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .449)
11	4	4	18	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
8	2	4	12	Cdn. Non Eng.	
5	1	2	7	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .144)
9	3	3	16	Non Cdn. Eng.	
9	1	7	10	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Vocabulary is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 68%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	75	1393
No	25	460
Not Checked	<1	1
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
75	1	74	78	Total B.C.	---
68	2	65	71	Males	Females > Males (p = 0)
82	1	79	84	Females	
79	1	77	81	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
64	2	60	69	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
76	2	73	79	1 or 2	No difference (p = .678)
75	2	71	79	3	
76	2	71	81	4	
74	3	69	79	5 or 6	
70	4	63	78	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
80	6	69	91	None	Overall difference (p = .003) 1 or less than 1 hours > 4 or more
83	2	78	87	1 or less than 1	
75	2	70	78	2	
77	2	73	81	3	
71	2	68	74	4 or more	

Vocabulary is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
76	1	74	78	Born in Canada	no difference
72	3	66	79	Not Born in Canada	(p = .285)
75	1	73	78	English only in home	no difference
76	2	72	79	Other lang. in home	(p = .633)
75	3	70	80	Read other lang.	no difference
75	1	73	77	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .523)
80	5	70	89	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
76	3	70	83	Cdn. Non Eng.	
75	2	70	80	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .687)
71	5	61	82	Non Cdn. Eng.	
76	1	74	79	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Vocabulary is sophisticated

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 91%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	8	149
No	91	1688
Not Checked	1	17
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
8	1	7	10	Total B.C.	---
6	1	5	8	Males	Females > Males (p = .011)
10	1	8	12	Females	
10	1	8	11	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
4	1	2	5	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
7	1	5	10	1 or 2	No difference (p = .455)
8	1	5	10	3	
11	2	7	14	4	
8	2	5	12	5 or 6	
7	2	3	12	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
11	4	2	20	None	Overall differences (p = 0) 1 or 2 hours > 4 or more
13	2	9	17	1 or less than 1	
12	2	8	15	2	
7	1	5	10	3	
5	1	3	6	4 or more	

Vocabulary is sophisticated

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
8	1	7	9	Born in Canada	no difference
10	2	6	15	Not Born in Canada	(p = .253)
8	1	7	10	English only in home	no difference
8	1	5	10	Other lang. in home	(p = .608)
9	2	6	13	Read other lang.	no difference
8	1	7	10	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .439)
15	4	7	23	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
6	2	3	10	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .139)
7	1	4	9	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
7	3	1	12	Non Cdn. Eng.	
9	1	7	11	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Spelling is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 69%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	59	1098
No	41	752
Not Checked	<1	4
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
59	1	57	62	Total B.C.	---
49	2	46	52	Males	Females > Males (p =0)
69	2	66	72	Females	
63	1	60	65	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
48	2	43	52	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
60	2	57	64	1 or 2	No difference (p = .576)
61	2	56	65	3	
56	3	50	61	4	
58	3	52	64	5 or 6	
58	4	49	66	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
56	7	42	69	None	Overall difference (p = .003) 1 or less than 1 hour > 4 or more
68	3	62	74	1 or less than 1	
59	2	54	64	2	
62	2	58	67	3	
55	2	51	58	4 or more	

Spelling is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
59	1	57	62	Born in Canada	no difference
61	4	54	68	Not Born in Canada	(p = .654)
58	1	56	61	English only in home	no difference
62	2	58	66	Other lang. in home	(p = .168)
60	3	54	66	Read other lang.	no difference
59	1	57	62	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .675)
69	5	58	80	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
62	4	54	69	Cdn. Non Eng.	
61	3	55	66	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .451)
47	6	45	68	Non Cdn. Eng.	
49	1	56	62	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Punctuation is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 67%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	54	1000
No	44	810
Not Checked	2	44
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
54	1	52	56	Total B.C.	---
47	2	44	50	Males	Females > Males (p = 0)
60	2	57	63	Females	
58	1	55	60	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
42	1	37	47	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
56	2	53	60	1 or 2	No difference (p = .364)
53	2	48	57	3	
54	3	48	59	4	
52	3	46	58	5 or 6	
48	4	40	57	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
50	7	36	64	None	No difference (p = .151)
59	3	53	65	1 or less than 1	
57	2	52	62	2	
54	2	49	58	3	
51	2	47	54	4 or more	

Punctuation is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
54	1	52	57	Born in Canada	no difference
51	4	44	58	Not Born in Canada	(p = .393)
54	1	49	57	English only in home	no difference
54	2	50	58	Other lang. in home	(p = .593)
49	3	43	55	Read other lang.	no difference
55	1	52	57	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .077)
49	6	37	60	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
53	4	45	60	Cdn. Non Eng.	
57	3	51	63	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .686)
54	6	42	65	Non Cdn. Eng.	
55	2	52	58	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Capitalization is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 72%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	75	1386
No	24	440
Not Checked	2	28
Total	100	1854

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
75	1	73	77	Total B.C.	---
67	2	64	70	Males	Females > Males (p = 0)
82	1	80	85	Females	
78	1	76	80	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
65	2	60	70	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
79	2	76	82	1 or 2	1 or 2 > 7 or more (p < .05) no other difference
74	2	70	78	3	
74	3	69	79	4	
72	3	66	77	5 or 6	
65	4	57	73	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
63	7	80	76	None	Overall difference (p = 0) but Scheffé not significant
82	2	77	86	1 or less than 1	
80	2	76	84	2	
77	2	74	81	3	
68	2	65	72	4 or more	

Capitalization is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
75	1	73	77	Born in Canada	no difference
76	3	70	82	Not Born in Canada	(p = .687)
75	1	72	77	English only in home	no difference
75	2	72	79	Other lang. in home	(p = .684)
74	3	68	79	Read other lang.	no difference
75	1	73	77	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .578)
73	5	63	83	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
76	3	69	82	Cdn. Non Eng.	
76	2	71	81	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
78	5	68	87	Non Cdn. Eng.	(p = .261)
75	1	72	77	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 8

OBJECTIVE: Handwriting is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 80%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	86	1600
No	13	234
Not Checked	1	18
Total	100	1852

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
86	1	85	88	Total B.C.	---
78	1	75	80	Males	Females > Males (p =0)
95	1	93	96	Females	
88	1	86	89	13 years or less	Younger > older (p = .003)
82	2	78	86	14 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
87	1	85	90	1 or 2	No differences (p = .178)
87	2	84	90	3	
83	2	79	87	4	
89	2	85	93	5 or 6	
83	3	77	89	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
89	4	80	98	None	No differences (p = .176)
89	2	86	93	1 or less than 1	
85	2	81	88	2	
88	1	85	91	3	
85	1	82	87	4 or more	

Handwriting is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
86	1	85	88	Born in Canada	no difference
88	2	83	92	Not Born in Canada	(p = .589)
86	1	84	88	English only in home	no difference
87	1	84	89	Other lang. in home	(p = .666)
92	2	89	95	Read other lang.	Reading a lang. other than eng./fr. >not doing so (p = .003)
85	1	83	87	Read only Eng./Fr.	
89	4	82	96	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
89	2	84	94	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .573)
85	2	81	89	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
90	4	82	97	Non Cdn. Eng.	
86	1	84	88	Cdn. Eng.	

APPENDIX II-C

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Statistical Summary

Grade 12

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Has a developed argument or thesis

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 73%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	80	1447
No	17	305
Not Checked	4	65
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
80	1	78	82	Total B.C.	---
79	1	76	82	Males	No differences (p = .362)
80	1	78	83	Females	
81	1	79	83	17 years or less	Younger > older (p = .003)
74	2	69	79	18 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
84	2	80	89	1 or 2	No differences (p = .457)
79	2	76	83	3	
79	2	75	83	4	
79	2	75	83	5 or 6	
78	3	74	84	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
75	5	65	85	None	No differences (p = .664)
81	1	78	84	1 or less than 1	
79	2	75	82	2	
80	2	76	85	3	
79	3	72	85	4 or more	

Has a developed argument on thesis

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
80	1	78	82	Born in Canada	no difference
79	3	73	85	Not Born in Canada	(p = .656)
80	1	78	82	English only in home	no difference
78	2	75	82	Other lang. in home	(p = .283)
77	2	72	81	Read other lang.	no difference
80	1	78	82	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .164)
74	4	65	82	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
81	3	76	87	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .282)
78	3	73	84	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
86	4	78	94	Non Cdn. Eng.	
80	1	78	82	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: The essay shows a clear organizational pattern

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 66%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	65	1179
No	34	627
Not Checked	1	11
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
65	1	63	67	Total B.C.	---
62	2	59	66	Males	Females > Males
67	2	64	70	Females	(p = .023)
68	1	65	70	17 years or less	Younger > older
53	3	48	58	18 years or more	(p = 0)
				No. Schools Attended	
70	3	64	75	1 or 2	No differences
65	2	61	69	3	
60	3	55	65	4	(p = .102)
68	2	63	72	5 or 6	
63	3	57	69	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
67	5	56	78	None	Overall difference
68	2	65	71	1 or less than 1	(p = .027)
63	2	59	67	2	but Scheffé
63	3	58	69	3	not significant
56	4	48	73	4 or more	

The essay shows a clear organizational pattern

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
65	1	62	67	Born in Canada	no difference
68	3	62	75	Not Born in Canada	(p = .316)
66	1	63	69	English only in home	no difference
62	2	58	66	Other lang. in home	(p = .118)
62	3	57	67	Read other lang.	no difference
66	1	63	68	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .251)
62	5	52	71	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
63	3	56	69	Cdn. Non Eng.	
64	3	57	70	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .371)
75	5	65	84	Non Cdn. Eng.	
65	1	62	68	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Appropriate substantiation is evident

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 70%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	71	1288
No	26	472
Not Checked	3	57
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
71	1	69	73	Total B.C.	---
71	2	68	74	Males	No difference
71	1	68	74	Females	(p = .574)
73	1	71	76	17 years or less	Younger > older
62	3	57	67	18 years or more	(p = 0)
				No. Schools Attended	
74	3	68	79	1 or 2	No differences
69	2	65	73	3	(p = .079)
67	3	62	72	4	
75	2	71	79	5 or 6	
72	3	66	78	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
71	5	61	82	None	No differences
72	2	69	76	1 or less than 1	(p = .480)
71	2	67	75	2	
70	3	65	76	3	
65	4	58	72	4 or more	

Appropriate substantiation is evident

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
71	1	69	73	Born in Canada	no difference
71	3	65	78	Not Born in Canada	(p = .613)
72	1	70	75	English only in home	English only > other
67	2	67	71	Other lang. in home	lang. in home (p = .016)
69	2	64	74	Read other lang.	no difference
71	1	69	74	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .301)
64	5	54	73	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
69	3	62	75	Cdn. Non Eng.	
68	3	62	74	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .076)
81	4	72	90	Non Cdn. Eng.	
72	1	69	75	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Individual paragraphs are well developed

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 62%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	54	984
No	43	789
Not Checked	2	44
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
54	1	52	57	Total B.C.	---
50	2	47	54	Males	Females > Males
58	2	54	61	Females	(p = .002)
57	1	54	59	17 years or less	Younger > older
44	3	38	49	18 years or more	(p = 0)
				No. Schools Attended	
58	3	52	64	1 or 2	No differences
53	2	48	57	3	(p = .232)
50	3	45	56	4	
57	2	53	62	5 or 6	
55	3	49	61	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
59	6	48	71	None	Overall difference (p = .020) but Scheffé not significant
57	2	54	61	1 or less than 1	
50	2	46	54	2	
57	3	50	62	3	
47	4	39	54	4 or more	

ividual paragraphs are well developed

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
55	1	52	57	Born in Canada	no difference
52	4	45	59	Not Born in Canada	(p = .529)
52	1	52	58	English only in home	no difference
55	2	47	56	Other lang. in home	(p = .156)
53	3	47	58	Read other lang.	no difference
55	1	52	57	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .483)
47	5	37	57	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
57	3	50	63	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .224)
49	4	42	56	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
57	6	46	68	Non Cdn. Eng.	
56	1	53	59	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Sentence structure is effective

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 54%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	61	1107
No	36	546
Not Checked	4	64
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
61	1	59	63	Total B.C.	---
54	2	51	57	Males	Females > Males (p = 0)
67	2	64	70	Females	
64	1	62	67	17 years or less	Younger > older (p = 0)
48	3	42	53	18 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
68	3	62	74	1 or 2	No differences (p = .063)
59	2	54	63	3	
57	3	52	62	4	
63	2	59	67	5 or 6	
61	3	55	67	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
68	5	58	79	None	Overall difference (p = 0) 4 or more hours < 0, 1 or 2
66	2	63	70	1 or less than 1	
59	2	55	63	2	
57	3	52	63	3	
44	4	36	51	4 or more	

Sentence structure is effective

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
61	1	49	64	Born in Canada	no difference
60	4	43	67	Not Born in Canada	(p = .681)
62	1	59	64	English only in home	no difference
59	2	54	63	Other lang. in home	(p = .201)
63	3	58	68	Read other lang.	no difference
60	1	58	63	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .318)
55	5	45	65	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
49	3	52	65	Cdn. Non Eng.	
60	3	53	67	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .542)
65	5	54	75	Non Cdn. Eng.	
62	1	59	65	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Sentences are clear

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 69%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	73	1319
No	25	458
Not Checked	2	40
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
73	1	71	75	Total B.C.	---
68	2	65	71	Males	Females > Males (p =0)
77	1	74	79	Females	
76	1	74	78	17 years or less	Younger > older (p =0)
60	3	54	65	18 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
79	3	74	84	1 or 2	Overall difference (p = .032) but Scheffé not significant
70	2	66	74	3	
70	2	65	75	4	
75	2	72	79	5 or 6	
70	3	64	76	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
82	4	73	90	None	Overall difference (p = 0) None or 1 or less than 1 hour < 4 or more hours
77	2	74	80	1 or less than 1	
70	2	66	74	2	
68	3	63	74	3	
62	4	55	70	4 or more	

Sentences are clear

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
73	1	71	75	Born in Canada	Born in Canada > Not born in Canada (p = .050)
67	3	60	73	Not Born in Canada	
74	1	71	76	English only in home	English only > other lang. in home (p = .045)
69	2	65	73	Other lang. in home	
70	2	66	75	Read other lang.	no difference (p = .270)
73	1	71	76	Read only Eng./Fr.	
62	5	52	71	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference (p = .067)
74	3	68	80	Cdn. Non Eng.	
68	3	62	75	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
73	5	64	83	Non Cdn. Eng.	
74	1	71	76	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Sentence structure is sophisticated

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 64%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	22	397
No	76	1380
Not Checked	2	40
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
22	1	20	24	Total B.C.	---
19	1	16	22	Males	Females > Males
24	1	22	27	Females	(p = .005)
24	1	21	26	17 years or less	Younger > older
15	2	11	19	18 years or more	(p = .001)
				No. Schools Attended	
27	3	21	32	1 or 2	No differences
22	2	18	26	3	(p = .128)
20	2	16	24	4	
23	2	19	27	5 or 6	
18	2	13	23	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
26	5	16	36	None	Overall difference (p = .001) but Scheffe not significant
25	2	22	28	1 or less than 1	
20	2	17	24	2	
21	2	16	25	3	
11	2	6	15	4 or more	

Sentence structure is sophisticated

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
22	1	20	24	Born in Canada	no difference
22	3	16	28	Not Born in Canada	(p = .305)
22	1	20	24	English only in home	no difference
21	2	18	25	Other lang. in home	(p = .652)
22	2	18	26	Read other lang.	no difference
22	1	20	24	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .305)
20	4	12	27	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
25	3	19	31	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .437)
18	3	13	24	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
25	5	16	35	Non Cdn. Eng.	
22	1	20	25	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Vocabulary is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 72%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	81	1473
No	18	334
Not Checked	1	10
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
81	1	79	83	Total B.C.	---
76	1	73	79	Males	Females > Males (p = 0)
85	1	83	87	Females	
83	1	81	85	17 years or less	Younger > older (p = .0)
72	2	68	77	18 years or more	
				No. Schools Attended	
79	3	73	84	1 or 2	No differences (p = .292)
80	2	76	83	3	
84	2	80	88	4	
80	2	77	84	5 or 6	
84	2	79	88	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
87	4	79	95	None	No differences (p = .057)
83	1	81	86	1 or less than 1	
80	2	77	84	2	
77	2	72	81	3	
78	3	72	84	4 or more	

Vocabulary is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
81	1	79	83	Born in Canada	no difference
79	3	73	84	Not Born in Canada	(p = .392)
82	1	80	84	English only in home	no difference
78	2	75	82	Other lang. in home	(p = .065)
80	2	76	84	Read other lang.	no difference
81	1	79	83	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .579)
74	4	65	82	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
81	3	76	86	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .101)
78	3	73	84	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
86	4	78	94	Non Cdn. Eng.	
83	1	80	85	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Vocabulary is sopniscated

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 66%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	21	381
No	77	1401
Not Checked	2	35
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
21	1	19	23	Total B.C.	---
20	1	17	22	Males	No difference
22	1	19	25	Females	(p = .186)
22	1	20	24	17 years or less	Younger > older
15	2	11	19	18 years or more	(p = .003)
				No. Schools Attended	
24	3	19	30	1 or 2	No differences
20	2	14	24	3	(p = .572)
22	2	18	27	4	
20	2	16	24	5 or 6	
20	2	15	25	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
33	5	22	44	None	Overall difference
25	2	22	28	1 or less than 1	(p = 0)
19	2	15	22	2	None or 1 or less
18	2	14	22	3	than 1 hour > 4 or
10	2	5	15	4 or more	more hours

Vocabulary is sophisticated

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
21	1	19	23	Born in Canada	no difference
21	3	16	27	Not Born in Canada	(p = .305)
21	1	19	24	English only in home	no difference
19	2	16	22	Other lang. in home	(p = .226)
22	2	18	26	Read other lang.	no difference
21	1	19	23	Read only Eng., Fr.	(p = .583)
16	4	9	23	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
22	3	17	28	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .203)
17	3	12	22	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
28	5	18	38	Non Cdn. Eng.	
21	1	19	24	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Spelling is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 76%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	69	1254
No	30	550
Not Checked	1	13
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
69	1	67	71	Total B.C.	---
58	2	55	62	Males	Females > Males
78	1	75	81	Females	(p = 0)
73	1	70	75	17 years or less	Younger > older
54	3	48	59	18 years or more	(p =0)
				No. Schools Attended	
68	3	62	74	1 or 2	No differences
70	2	66	74	3	(p = .689)
69	2	64	74	4	
70	2	66	74	5 or 6	
66	3	60	72	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
75	5	65	85	None	No differences
72	2	69	75	1 or less than 1	(p = .081)
67	2	63	71	2	
66	3	61	72	3	
64	4	57	71	4 or more	

Spelling is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
69	1	67	71	Born in Canada	no difference
67	3	60	74	Not Born in Canada	(p = .612)
69	1	66	71	English only in home	no difference
69	2	66	73	Other lang. in home	(p = .688)
69	2	64	74	Read other lang.	no difference
69	1	67	72	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .668)
66	5	56	75	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
69	3	63	75	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .537)
71	3	65	78	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
68	5	58	79	Non Cdn. Eng.	
71	1	66	72	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Punctuation is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 62%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	61	1111
No	36	648
Not Checked	3	58
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
61	1	59	63	Total B.C.	---
55	2	51	58	Males	Females > Males
67	2	64	70	Females	(p = 0)
64	1	62	44	17 years or less	Younger > older
49	3	67	54	18 years or more	(p = 0)
				No. Schools Attended	
65	3	59	71	1 or 2	No differences
61	2	56	65	3	(p = .419)
58	3	53	63	4	
63	2	59	68	5 or 6	
59	3	53	65	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
63	6	52	74	None	No differences
65	2	61	68	1 or less than 1	(p = .093)
59	2	54	63	2	
58	3	52	63	3	
57	4	50	65	4 or more	

Punctuation is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
61	1	59	64	Born in Canada	no difference
60	4	53	67	Not Born in Canada	(p = .666)
62	1	59	64	English only in home	no difference
60	2	56	64	Other lang. in home	(p = .548)
61	3	56	66	Read other lang.	no difference
61	1	59	64	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .555)
59	5	49	69	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
60	3	53	67	Cdn. Non Eng.	
61	3	54	68	2nd Gen. Cdn.	(p = .469)
60	6	48	71	Non Cdn. Eng.	
62	1	60	65	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Capitalization is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 82%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	88	1600
No	8	150
Not Checked	4	67
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
88	1	87	90	Total B.C.	---
84	1	82	87	Males	Females > Males
91	1	90	93	Females	(p = 0)
89	1	88	91	17 years or less	Younger > older
83	2	79	87	18 years or more	(p = .002)
				No. Schools Attended	
90	2	87	94	1 or 2	No differences
86	2	83	89	3	(p = .105)
88	2	85	92	4	
90	1	88	93	5 or 6	
85	2	81	90	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
84	4	76	93	None	No differences
89	1	87	91	1 or less than 1	(p = .384)
86	2	83	89	2	
89	2	86	93	3	
86	3	81	92	4 or more	

Capitalization is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
83	1	86	89	Born in Canada	Not born in Canada > born in Canada (p = .033)
93	2	89	96	Not Born in Canada	
87	1	85	89	English only in home	no difference (p = .078)
90	1	88	93	Other lang. in home	
89	2	85	92	Read other lang.	no difference (p = .670)
88	1	86	90	Read only Eng./Fr.	
93	2	88	98	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference (p = .198)
90	2	86	94	Cdn. Non Eng.	
89	2	84	93	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
92	3	86	98	Non Cdn. Eng.	
87	1	85	89	Cdn. Eng.	

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - GRADE 12

OBJECTIVE: Handwriting is acceptable

MARKER AGREEMENT (based on 200 Papers) = 80%

	Percent	Frequency
Yes	91	1650
No	7	122
Not Checked	2	45
Total	100	1817

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
91	1	90	92	Total B.C.	---
85	1	83	88	Males	Females > Males
95	1	94	97	Females	(p = 0)
92	1	91	94	17 years or less	Younger > older
84	2	80	88	18 years or more	(p = 0)
				No. Schools Attended	
94	2	90	97	1 or 2	No differences
90	1	87	93	3	(p = .408)
92	1	89	95	4	
90	1	87	92	5 or 6	
90	2	87	94	7 or more	
				No. Hours Watching TV	
90	4	82	97	None	No differences
92	1	90	94	1 or less than 1	(p = .676)
90	1	88	93	2	
90	2	87	94	3	
90	2	85	95	4 or more	

Handwriting is acceptable

Percent Yes	Standard Error	95% Confidence Limits Lower	Upper	Reporting Categories	Stat. Significance of Group Differences
91	1	89	92	Born in Canada	no difference
91	2	88	95	Not Born in Canada	(p = .598)
91	1	89	93	English only in home	no difference
90	1	88	93	Other lang. in home	(p = .526)
89	2	86	92	Read other lang.	no difference
91	1	90	93	Read only Eng./Fr.	(p = .251)
89	3	83	95	Non Cdn. Non Eng.	no difference
91	2	88	95	Cdn. Non Eng.	(p = .596)
89	2	85	94	2nd Gen. Cdn.	
92	3	86	98	Non Cdn. Eng.	
91	1	89	93	Cdn. Eng.	

APPENDIX II-D

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Comparison of Grade 8 and 12 Results

WRITTEN COMPOSITION - COMPARISON OF GRADE 8 WITH GRADE 12

(HOLDING MARKING STANDARDS CONSTANT)

(Based on 409 Grade 8 papers and the complete Grade 12 sample)

Objective	Grade 8			Grade 12			Comparison		
	P Value	Conf. Limits		P Value	Conf. Limits		Difference Gr.12 - Gr.8	F Value	Probability
		Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper			
Has a developed argument or thesis	62	57	67	80	78	82	18	58.6	0
The essay shows a clear organizational pattern	43	38	47	65	63	67	22	72.0	0
Appropriate substantiation is evident	51	46	56	71	69	73	20	61.1	0
Individual paragraphs are well developed	27	23	32	54	52	56	27	100.3	0
Sentence structure is effective	26	22	31	61	59	63	35	172.7	0
Sentences are clear	51	46	56	73	71	75	22	75.5	0
Sentence structure is sophisticated	3	2	5	22	20	24	19	80.3	0
Vocabulary is acceptable	42	37	47	81	79	83	39	300.3	0
Vocabulary is sophisticated	3	1	4	21	19	23	18	79.4	0
Spelling is acceptable	43	38	47	69	67	71	26	106.3	0
Punctuation is acceptable	37	32	42	61	59	63	24	82.2	0
Capitalization is acceptable	74	70	68	88	87	90	13	53.4	0
Handwriting is acceptable	83	80	87	91	90	92	8	21.0	0

APPENDIX II-E

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

1. Directions for Teachers
2. Test Booklet
3. Teacher Comments
4. Criteria for Marking

GRADES 8 AND 12

WRITTEN COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT

ADMINISTRATION DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

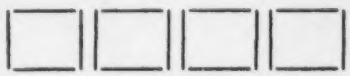
BEFORE THE ASSESSMENT

1. You should have both an introductory letter and an informational pamphlet on the Learning Assessment programme. Please read these items together with the specific directions which follow.

2. Your observations, comments and recommendations regarding this assessment are important. Please complete and return the reaction sheet on page 4 of these instructions.

3. The Written Composition assessment will require an uninterrupted ninety minute period. You should check with your school principal to confirm arrangements for your class.

4. Students will be asked to write the school code on the back cover page of the writing booklet. You should get this number from the principal and write it here for future reference.



5. Each student should have two pens for the writing session. Dictionaries should be available in the classroom.

THE ASSESSMENT PERIOD

1. This ninety minute period should be divided into four sections: introduction (approximately 10 minutes), idea generation (approximately 20 minutes), student writing (50 minutes) and background information (approximately 10 minutes). So that each student in every class has the same opportunity to express his/her ideas in writing, we ask that you adhere to both the suggested times and the specific instructions for each section.

2. Introduction (approximately 10 minutes). Tell the students that they are taking part in a province-wide writing assessment. Neither the names of the students nor the name of the teacher will appear on the writing booklet. This assessment should not be regarded as a provincial examination. However, students should try to provide a reasonable sample of their ideas in a good written form. Students may ask questions about the assessment and their part in it. Use the information in these instructions and in the accompanying pamphlet to answer these questions.

3. Idea Generation (approximately 20 minutes). Since writing should not take place without prior discussion, the aim of this section is to make students comfortable with the writing exercise and to generate ideas and opinions that could later be developed in a written form.

In the writing period that follows, each student will be asked to write a composition on the most interesting or exciting thing that he/she has seen, heard, read or imagined in the past few years. Each composition should include specific examples and the reasons for the writer's choice.

The following questions and activities could be used in discussing the group's ideas and opinions and in preparing students to write on this topic.

Questions:

a) What kinds of things do you find interesting or exciting? (Responses might include people, places, ideas, music, foods, books, movies ...)

b) What specific things interest you? (Responses might include specific examples of places (Mexico), feelings (being alone), music ("Crocodile Rock"), people (Chief Dan George), books ("I Never Promised You a Rose Garden"), etc.)

Activities:

a) List student responses, general and specific, on the board.

b) Select a specific student suggestion (an experience shared by many of the students) and have the class discuss the reasons for the choice.

Since the focus of this section is on the oral development of ideas, no attempt should be made to review principles of writing.

4. STUDENT WRITING (50 minutes)

a) Distribute the written composition booklets. (Note: The General Information questions on the back page should not be completed until after the student writing section.) Additional booklets should be distributed as needed. Where two booklets are used by one student, they should be stapled together.

b) Read the cover page instructions to the class.

c) Tell the students that, since they have fifty minutes to complete the assignment, a total re-writing of the composition should not be attempted. A readable, proof-read and corrected paper is, however, expected.

d) Try to get each student working individually as soon as possible. Students should not discuss the composition with each other during the writing period.

e) Students may ask for clarification. Avoid suggesting topics, examples or wordings. Dictionaries should be available for reference. Erase group ideas from the board.

f) After forty minutes, tell the class that there are ten minutes left. Remind students to proof-read and make any necessary corrections.

5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION (10 minutes)

a) You should write your school's code number (see the first page of these instructions) on the board so that each student can copy it onto the back page of the booklet.

b) Please give as much help to individual students as they need to answer the questions on this page.

c) As soon as this section has been completed, collect the booklets and tie them together. This package (together with a separate bundle of unused booklets) should be returned to the school office.

d) The comment form on the reverse side of this page is for your observations and suggestions. Please complete it, detach and include it with the writing booklets.

WRITTEN COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT

TEACHER COMMENT FORM

To assist it in preparing future assessment programmes, the Learning Assessment Branch would appreciate your taking a few minutes to comment on this one.

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of this assessment? (intent, information, instructions, time, topic, idea generation, general information)

2. What recommendations or suggestions would you make for future assessments?

Please detach and return with the package of completed writing booklets.

APPENDIX II E

WRITTEN COMPOSITION SURVEY

The composition that you are being asked to write is part of a Province-wide survey of writing at your grade level. This survey will provide important information for persons concerned with the teaching of composition.

> You are to write a composition (a piece of writing several paragraphs in length) in which you tell about the most interesting or exciting thing that you have **seen, heard, read,** or **imagined** in the past few years.
>
> You should give reasons and specific examples that will help the reader to understand your topic.

Although your name will not appear on the essay, you are urged to do as well as you can. There are no "right" answers. Remember, however, that the assignment calls for honest opinions and examples.

Your co-operation is appreciated.

Learning Assessment Programme

Education, Victoria, B.C.

Please do NOT use this space

Column

WRITTEN COMPOSITION SURVEY

GENERAL INFORMATION

☐☐☐☐ School Code 1–10

Today's date ..... (Day) ..... (Month) Your age today in years..... 11–12

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER BESIDE YOUR ANSWER

A. 1. Male 2. Female 13

B. In which English course are you enrolled? 1. English 8. 14
2. English 12.

C. How many schools have you attended since beginning Grade 1? 15

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (or more)

D. Were you born in Canada? 1. Yes. 2. No. 16

If your answer is No, about how long have you lived in Canada? 17

1. Less than one year.
2. About one year.
3. About two years.
4. Three years or more.

E. Did you speak a language other than English before you began to go to school? 18
1. Yes. 2. No.

F. Is English the only language spoken in your home? 1. Yes. 2. No. 19

G. Can you read a language other than English or French? 1. Yes. 2. No. 20

H. Do you watch television at home? 1. Yes. 2. No. 21

If your answer is Yes, about how many hours do you watch television on each school-day? 22

1. Less than one hour.
2. About one hour.
3. About two hours.
4. About three hours.
5. Four hours or more.

SM-1175-2445

TEACHER COMMENTS

GRADE 8 WRITTEN COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT

Out of a total of 76 teachers involved in the sample, 61 provided responses to the following two questions.

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of this assessment? (Intent, Information, Instruction, Time, Topic, Idea Generation, General Information.)

2. What recommendations or suggestions would you make for future assessments?

Responses were tallied and summarized according to the following topics:

1. ADMINISTRATION

Administration of the test posed few problems for the majority of teachers. Most felt that the instructions and information were clear. Those teachers who were confused registered such complaints as:

i) details concerning rewrite and partial rewrite need clarification

ii) clarification needed in how much the instructor should detail the form of the composition (narrative vs expository, etc.)

2. TIME

Several teachers explained that they felt the time allotment could have been divided more efficiently by cutting down the time for idea generation, perhaps shaving slightly the writing time, and allotting much more time for proof reading and rewriting, or the 'final copy'. Some teachers suggested breaking the assessment time into two standard classroom periods, thus making the sitting time more comfortable to students and avoiding much disruption of classes.

A number of teachers also found the time of year inappropriate and possibly not conducive to the best work achievable by the students.

3. THE TEST

There were some teachers who expressed concern over the topic for the written composition assessment. These teachers commented that it was too generalized, vague, and even redundant. There were a number of suggestions that there should be a more specific topic, or a list of topics, attuned to the interests and abilities of grade 8 pupils, from which they could choose. Several teachers suggested a reading assignment followed by paragraph answers (comprehension and paragraph).

Apparently, the majority of grade 8 students are not familiar with an essay assignment of this size but are, instead, at the single paragraph, basic composition level.

Also, there appeared to be some confusion on the part of some teachers over the actual purpose of this survey. It would appear, judging by the comments of a few of the teachers, that this was thought to be a survey of grade 8 English, and that therefore there should be much more material covered. Those few teachers suggested that separate sections of the test cover areas such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, reading skills, and paragraphs.

4. GENERAL INFORMATION

Those teachers who did comment on this aspect of the survey thought it to be fair. A couple of teachers suggested that this section be filled out prior to completing the test, and one teacher felt that more of the pupils' backgrounds in the English language should be included.

Overall, the greater number of teachers who chose to comment thought the survey to be adequate although some teachers displayed concern that their class groups may not be a true sampling (Remedial English, lower one third, upper one third, etc.) and would therefore invalidate their portion of the assessment. Several teachers again asked for results to be forwarded to them and a few teachers questioned the validity of the survey.

TEACHER COMMENTS

GRADE 12 WRITTEN COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT

1. ADMINISTRATION

Of the few teachers who commented on this aspect of the test, most seemed to find the instructions and information clear or adequate. The problems which did arise occurred mainly on the 'idea generation' section where, due to the openess of the topic, some students found it difficult to formulate ideas and begin writing.

2. TIME

On this aspect of the test, many of the teachers surveyed felt that they could have used more time specifically for writing. Several teachers thought that the time allotment could have been more efficiently distributed by allowing less time for idea generation, instructions, and 'general information' and more time for rough work, revision, and proofing. One common complaint was that at the Grade 12 level the time allotted for this survey does not allow for the students to properly demonstrate their skills.

Some teachers also asked that they be informed of the survey much earlier in order to allow for some sort of preparation or discussion with the students in advance of the survey. This may cut down on or perhaps eliminate the need for the idea generation period. Suggestion was also made toward administering the test during two separate English periods on consecutive days.

3. THE TEST

The topic appeared to be the most commented upon aspect of the test. In the opinion of many of the teachers who commented, the topic was too broad and vague for the students. Several teachers felt that a list of specific essay topics was necessary in order to achieve the calibre of expository prose expected at this level. While few specific topics were suggested, many of the teachers cautioned that topics be challenging, mature and appealing, and that topics which would engender an emotional response, be avoided. A few teachers asked that narrative, as well as expository prose be encouraged.

As was the case with some of the Grade 8 teachers, a number of Grade 12 teachers felt that more skills should be examined, possibly in separate sections. One teacher suggested we test "...imagination, creativity, depth and breadth of content, maturity, evidence of ability to think and write critically, humorously, seriously, etc. and to do it well." Another suggested assessment in the following categories: 1. vocabulary; 2. punctuation; 3. short paragraph; 4. one essay on a limitless topic.

Several teachers thought that the anonymity aspect of the survey was questionable in that students, knowing that they could not be identified and that the test meant nothing toward their grades, would tend to do less than their best work. Also, many teachers felt it important that the students know the results of the survey and the standings of each student, class, and school.

Some teachers tended to be conditional in their comments on the survey, for example, "If the exam is intended to test spontaneous writing in English, then it is good." One teacher also commented that, due to the type of assignment, the results could be biased toward the student who is more instantly creative.

4. GENERAL INFORMATION

Of the teachers who commented on this portion of the assessment, several thought it would be better if this section was completed prior to writing the essay. Also, one teacher thought it might be more pertinent to ask what books the students read instead of how many hours of television they watched each day.

Overall, the administration of the test seemed to pose relatively few problems for the teachers or students. In grade 12 the students appeared to take the assessment less seriously. The Grade 12 teachers involved seemed less concerned about the validity of the assessment than they were about receiving feedback, especially for the students' sake, but most appeared to think the intent of the assessment commendable.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - LEARNING ASSESSMENT BRANCH

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT PROJECT

CRITERIA FOR RANKING STUDENT ESSAYS

(for use during Feb. 16-20 marking workshop)

1. IDEAS

High. (Ranked 1,2 or 3) The student has given some thought to the topic, and shows a degree of insight. He discusses each main point long enough to show clearly what he means. He supports each main point with arguments, examples, or details; he gives the reader some reason for believing it. His points are clearly related to the topic and to the main idea or impression he is trying to convey. No necessary points are overlooked and there is no padding.

Middle. (Ranked 4,5 or 6) The paper gives the impression that the student (does not really believe what he is writing or) does not fully understand the meaning of his chosen topic. He tries to guess what the reader wants and writes what he thinks will get by. He does not explain his points very clearly or make them come alive to the reader. Points may be asserted but are inadequately explained. He writes what he thinks will sound good, not what he believes or knows.

Low. (Ranked 7,8 or 9) It is either hard to tell what points the student is trying to make or else they are so silly that, if he had only stopped to think, he would have realized that they made no sense. He is only trying to get something down on paper. The same point is repeated in slightly different words.

2. ORGANIZATION

High. (Ranked 1,2 or 3) The paper starts at a good point, has a sense of movement, gets somewhere, and then concludes. The paper has an underlying plan and point of view that the reader can follow; he is never in doubt as to where he is or where he is going. Main points are treated at greatest length or with greatest emphasis, others in proportion to their importance.

Middle. (Ranked 4,5 or 6) The organization of this paper is mechanical. There is usually a one-paragraph introduction, three main points each treated in one paragraph, and a conclusion that often seems tacked on or forced. Some trivial points are treated in greater detail than important points, and there is usually some dead wood that might better be cut out.

Low. (Ranked 7,8 or 9) This paper starts anywhere and never gets anywhere. The main points are not clearly separated from one another, and they come in a random order -- as though the student had not given any thought to what he intended to say before he started to write. The paper seems to start in one direction, then another, then another, until the reader is lost.

3. USAGE, SENTENCE STRUCTURE

High.(Ranked 1,2 or 3) The paper is free of usage and structural errors. Sentences are clear and interesting. Sentence structures and lengths are varied effectively.

Middle.(Ranked 4,5 or 6) There are a few errors in usage but not enough to obscure meaning. The sentence structure is usually correct in familiar sentence patterns but there are occasional errors in complicated patterns: errors in parallelism, subordination, consistency of tenses, reference of pronouns, etc.

Low.(Ranked 7,8 or 9) There are so many serious errors in usage and sentence structure that the paper is hard to understand.

4. VOCABULARY

High.(Ranked 1,2 or 3) The writer uses a sprinkling of uncommon words or or familiar words in an uncommon setting. He shows an interest in words and in putting them together in slightly unusual ways. Some of his experiments with words may not quite come off, but this is such a promising trait in a young writer that a few mistakes may be forgiven. For the most part, he uses words correctly, but he also uses them with imagination.

Middle.(Ranked 4,5 or 6) The writer is addicted to tired old phrases and hackneyed expressions. If you left a blank in one of his sentences, almost anyone could guess what word he would use at that point. He does not stop to think how to say something; he just says it in the same way as everyone else. A writer may also get a middle rating on this quality if he overdoes his experiments with uncommon words: if he always uses a big word when a little word would serve his purpose better, or if he mixes level of vocabulary.

Low.(Ranked 7,8 or 9) The writer uses words so carelessly and inexactly that he gets far too many wrong. These are not intentional experiments with words in which failure may be forgiven: they represent groping for words and using them without regard to their fitness. A paper written in a childish vocabulary may also get a low rating on this quality, even if no word is clearly wrong.

5. SPELLING, PUNCTUATION AND HANDWRITING

High.(Ranked 1,2 or 3) There are few, if any, misspellings or punctuation errors. Handwriting is clear and attractive.

Middle.(Ranked 4,5 or 6) There are several spelling errors in difficult words and a few violations of basic spelling rules. There may be several errors in punctuation, although these should not detract from understanding. The handwriting is legible.

Low.(Ranked 7,8 9) Comprehension is interfered with by the frequency of spelling and punctuation errors. The paper is sloppy in appearance and difficult to read.

6. RANKING OF OVERALL ESSAY EFFECTIVENESS

High. (Ranked 1,2 or 3) The paper shows originality of thought and presentation. Both ideas and words are clear and interesting. There are few, if any, mechanical errors.

Middle. (Ranked 4,5 or 6) The paper is generally clear although lacking in originality. There may be a few problems in organization and sentence structure and occasional errors in spelling and punctuation. Comprehension of the basic ideas is not effected.

Low. (Ranked 7,8 or 9) Ideas are poor or are poorly presented. Organizational and mechanical errors predominate. Comprehension is difficult.

The above commentary was based, in part, on material contained in Measuring Growth in English by Paul B. Diederich. Adaptation was made by Bob Aitken, Nelson Smith and Alex Holm.